



Hamilton Immigration
Partnership Council



Immigrant Voices: Hamilton Immigrant Survey 2023 Report

— NOVEMBER 2023 —

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings from Hamilton Immigrant Survey 2023 – the largest survey of immigrants conducted locally in the recent past. In this survey, immigrant refers to anyone who was born outside Canada and lives, works, or studies in Hamilton. This includes economic class immigrants, family-sponsored immigrants, refugees, international students, refugee claimants, temporary foreign workers, and recent Ukrainian arrivals.

Close to 700 individuals completed this survey, sharing their experiences, challenges, strengths, contributions, and suggestions for improving outcomes for immigrants in Hamilton. Findings from this survey provide a snapshot of how immigrants are faring in various aspects of life, as perceived by immigrants themselves and -- for some questions -- shared in their own words. The findings also reveal how these differ according to markers such as immigration category and status, length of time in Canada, racialized status, and gender.

The survey captured diverse groups of immigrants, with a particular spotlight on newcomers. Almost three-quarters of respondents had been in Canada less than five years, thereby providing specific insight into the recent experiences of newcomers. Participants identified as being from all the categories of immigration noted above, with the largest group being refugees. Women made up 55% of respondents, and most participants were of core working age. In addition, participants were linguistically and ethnically diverse. Participants cited more than 50 first languages, with the top three being Spanish, Arabic, and Persian/Dari. Finally, they came from various ethnic and religious backgrounds, and over 85% identified as racialized (non-white).

Findings from the survey revealed that housing unaffordability, income inadequacy and underemployment were major issues facing participants, with substantial differences across participant groups by immigration category, length of time in Canada, and racialized status. Four in 10 participants said their housing was unaffordable, with bigger proportions among newcomers, racialized immigrants, refugees, refugee claimants, international students and Ukrainian temporary residents. Just over 70% of all participants experienced income inadequacy, and refugees, international students and newcomers were most likely to report their income was inadequate. In addition, despite participants being highly educated (with 72% having a Bachelor's degree or above), half of those working reported being employed in jobs that did not match their skills, education and experience. This percentage was higher among newcomers, temporary residents, refugees, racialized participants, women, and those with a Bachelor's degree.

Life satisfaction, sense of belonging, and perceptions of safety were relatively high among participants, but feelings of isolation and experiences of discrimination were also prominent.

Community service use and satisfaction with services were high among participants with almost all participants reporting using at least one service in the past year. The most frequently used services were public transit, health, education, and recreation. Settlement, language learning, and employment services were used by around three-quarters of participants. Most participants rated the services in Hamilton positively. However, a considerable number of participants lamented the lack of access to interpretation services in healthcare settings. Participants reported various ways they contributed to the community, with the most common being helping neighbours, contributing to improving the environment, and building skills to contribute to the economy. Many also said they were volunteering and donating to charities.

About one-third of participants were very satisfied (and nearly half were somewhat satisfied) with their lives, with family class immigrants reporting highest life satisfaction. Close to 7 in 10 participants reported a strong sense of belonging in Hamilton, higher among family class immigrants but substantially lower among white participants and those who have lived in Canada between 6-10 years. In addition, about half of the participants felt very safe in Hamilton, with lower proportions among those here more than five years, white people, and women.

Feelings of isolation were high among participants, with over one-third revealing that they felt very isolated in the past year. By immigration category, international student participants reported the highest levels of feeling very isolated or alone of any immigration category, at 47%. Newcomers and racialized immigrants were more likely to report experiencing isolation than long-term immigrants and white participants respectively. These findings echo previous HIPC research in 2021 and 2022 that found lack of social connections to be one of the top three challenges to settlement and sense of belonging for newcomers.

Over one-third of participants reported that they had experienced discrimination in the past year. This was higher among long-term immigrants, refugees, and racialized participants. Most common bases of discrimination were racialization and skin colour, ethnicity and culture, and accent. Among temporary residents and international students, immigration status was also a prominent basis of discrimination. The most common contexts of discrimination were workplaces; stores, banks or restaurants; when applying for a job; and looking for housing. These results echo what a HIPC-commissioned survey on experiences of discrimination showed in 2021, except that discrimination in the context of looking for housing has risen in prominence.

About half of participants said Hamilton was a welcoming city, but this was lower among long-term immigrants compared to newcomers and among women compared to men. Further, about 70% of participants said they had a positive settlement experience in Hamilton, highest among family class immigrants.

The top reasons for choosing to live in Hamilton were having family and friends in the city, to attend postsecondary institutions, and affordability compared to other cities. About 60% of all survey participants said that they planned to stay in Hamilton permanently. Among international students, 40% noted their intention to remain in Hamilton.

The most frequently-mentioned challenges facing immigrants were: cost of living, finding affordable housing, and finding work, with many also reporting difficulties in making friends and accessing healthcare. Participants shared their suggestions to community leaders on how to improve the lives of immigrants in Hamilton, placing great emphasis on the need to address housing affordability and cost of living, and to reduce barriers to meaningful employment.

Findings in this report aim to contribute to our understanding of the experiences, strengths, challenges and contributions of various groups of immigrants in Hamilton in order to guide future collective actions locally to improve the settlement experiences of newcomers and immigrants.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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HIPC acknowledges student Program Assistant Sara Qazimllari, for her work on the data collection, cleaning and analysis, and writing the first draft of this report during the summer months of 2023. HIPC's Evaluation Committee provided input and feedback at every step of this project. Members were Olive Wahoush of McMaster University (committee co-chair), Yudara Weerakoon (committee-co-chair), Maisie Raymond-Brown of YWCA, Anabelle Ragsag of Filipinas of HamOnt, and Elizabeth Webb of Hamilton Community Foundation.

HIPC is also grateful to the Waterloo Immigration Partnership, especially Dan Vandebelt, who shared expertise and previous experience of conducting this immigrant survey in Waterloo region in 2019 and 2021, including the survey questionnaire, ethics review application, and data analysis template.

About Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC)

HIPC is a community table whose members work together to create a positive settlement experience for newcomers. HIPC members represent settlement agencies, educational institutions, the private sector, municipal departments, persons with lived experiences of immigration and more. HIPC is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and housed within the City of Hamilton's Economic Development Division.

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INTRODUCTION

With immigration increasing nationally as well as locally, there is a growing need to better understand the experiences of immigrants and newcomers. To this end, Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC) collaborated with other local immigration partnerships (LIPs) across Canada to conduct a large survey of immigrants and newcomers in our communities. This initiative traces its roots to the biannual immigrant survey conducted by the Waterloo Region LIP. In 2023, Hamilton, alongside six other LIPs, embraced an opportunity to conduct this survey locally with shared methodologies, tools and objectives.

The goal of the survey is to understand the needs and experiences of immigrants in order to better support their settlement. This project aligns with HIPC's 2021-2025 strategic plan which aspires to see newcomers have a successful settlement experience and feeling a sense of belonging in Hamilton. Additionally, this survey complements our wider efforts to understand the broader community context and evaluate our collective impact. We hope that the survey results and analysis provide valuable insights to service providers, local government, businesses, and the wider community, ultimately leading to the improved settlement and integration of newcomers.

The survey's major research questions were:

- What are the diverse experiences of immigrants living in Hamilton, as perceived by immigrants themselves, including barriers and challenges in settling and integrating in Hamilton?
- What demographic, immigration and other factors align with or impact immigrant settlement experiences, integration/belonging, well-being, and service use?
- What are immigrants' suggestions for future community action?
- What do immigrants think is important for government, policy makers, community organizations and others to focus on to address their needs and desires?

The survey was translated into eight languages other than English, helping us to reach diverse groups of immigrants. This allowed us to better understand different experiences and potential disparities.

PROFILE OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

In total, 689 immigrants responded to the survey. The term “immigrant” is used broadly in this report to include anyone who was born outside Canada and now lives, works or studies in Hamilton, including permanent residents, temporary residents, refugees, international students, temporary foreign workers, refugee claimants, Ukrainian newcomers and foreign nationals who immigrated to Canada through various pathways and have become citizens now.

The survey was available in short and long versions. Just over half of participants filled out the long version of the survey in English, and the rest filled out the shorter version in English or another language. In this section, we disaggregate participants by various factors, some of which were only captured in the long survey version.

Immigration category

Survey respondents represented diverse immigration categories and included both permanent residents and temporary residents. The largest immigration category was refugees (32%), including government-assisted refugees, privately sponsored refugees, and former refugee claimants who were permanent residents or citizens at the time of completing the survey.

Economic class immigrants represented 14% of participants. They immigrated through programs such as the Federal Skilled Worker Program, Provincial Nominee Program, Canadian Experience Class, and dependants of principal applicants in these programs. Family class immigrants made up 17% of respondents. These consisted of sponsored spouses, parents or grandparents, and other family-sponsored immigrants. International students made up 18% of participants, refugee claimants were 4% of participants, temporary foreign workers were 6% of participants, and CUAET (Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel) visa holders were 6%.¹

Immigration Category	# of participants	% of participants
Economic class immigrant	95	14%
Family class immigrant	118	17%
Government-assisted refugee	109	16%
Privately sponsored refugee	15	2%
Former refugee claimant and now permanent resident/citizen	97	14%
REFUGEE SUBTOTAL (government-assisted, privately sponsored, and former refugee claimants)	221	32%
Refugee claimant	29	4%
International student	121	18%
Temporary foreign worker	38	6%
Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) visa holder / Ukrainian temporary resident	52	8%
Unknown or prefer not to answer	6	1%
Other	9	1%
TOTAL	689	100%

¹ In this report, the words “CUAET visa holders” and “Ukrainian temporary residents” are used interchangeably.

Length of time in Canada

We heard from both newer and long-time immigrants in Hamilton. About three-quarters of the participants were newcomers to Canada (arrived in the last 5 years), with 37% of respondents having lived in Canada for less than a year. Immigrants who had been in Canada for 6-10 years made up 13% of participants, and those who had been in Canada for more than 10 years made up 14% of participants.

Length of time in Canada	# of participants	% of participants
Less than 1 year	252	37%
1 to 5 years	251	37%
SUBTOTAL: Newcomers in Canada (arrived 5 years or less)	503	74%
6 to 10 years	86	13%
More than 10 years	95	14%
TOTAL	684	100%

Age categories

Survey participants were mostly individuals of core working age. The largest age category was 25 to 34 years of age (39%). Those between 20 and 24 years of age represented 16% of participants. Respondents aged 35 to 44 years accounted for 24% of participants. The 45 to 54 years age group represented 12% of participants. Younger and older participants made up the smallest proportion of participants.

Age categories (long survey only)	# of participants	% of participants
16-19 years old	11	3%
20-24 years old	53	16%
25-34 years old	128	39%
35-44 years old	81	24%
45-54 years old	41	12%
55-64 years old	8	2%
65 years or older	10	3%
TOTAL	332	100%

Please note that the total number of participants for age categories is smaller because demographic questions were only asked in the long survey. This is true for tables on gender, sexual orientation, racialized status, level of education and first languages spoken.

Gender and sexual orientation

Women were slightly over-represented as they made up 55% of survey respondents. There were no respondents who identified as non-binary.

Gender (long survey only)	# of participants	% of participants
Man	144	45%
Woman	178	55%
Non-binary	0	0%
Prefer to self-describe	0	0%
TOTAL	332	100%

Sixteen participants (5%) identified as members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Sexual orientation (long survey only)	# of participants	% of participants
Identified as a member of LGBTQ+ community	16	5%
Did not identify as a member of LGBTQ+ community	295	95%
TOTAL	311	100%

Racialized status

Close to 9 in 10 respondents (87%) were racialized. Top racialized groups were Latin American (20%), followed by Arab (14%), and South Asian groups (14%). White participants represented 13%, while West Asian and Black respondent groups each accounted for 12% of respondents.

Population groups/racialized status (long survey only)	# of participants	% of participants
Latin American	69	20%
Arab	49	14%
South Asian (East Indian, Pakistan, Sri Lankan)	49	14%
White	45	13%
Black (e.g. Black-Caribbean, Black-African, Black-North American)	43	12%
West Asian (e.g. Iranian, Afghan)	40	12%
Chinese	14	4%
Southeast Asian (e.g. Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai)	14	4%
Filipino	9	3%
Other	15	4%

Faith community

Three-quarters of participants identified with a faith community. Those identifying as Christian made up one-third of participants (the largest group). Muslims were the second largest group representing 27% of the participants. Those identifying as Hindu made up 7%, and Sikhs were 3% of the respondents. Buddhists and Jews were least represented, with each accounting for 2% of the total respondents.

Faith community (long survey only)	# of participants	% of participants
Christian	97	33%
Muslim	79	27%
I am not a member of a faith community	73	25%
Hindu	21	7%
Sikh	8	3%
Buddhist	7	2%
Jewish	6	2%
TOTAL	291	100%

Top first languages

Participants reported over 55 first languages. The top first languages among participants were Spanish (16%), Arabic (16%), English (15%), and Persian/Dari (12%). Other first languages reported included Portuguese (5%), Punjabi (4%), Ukrainian (3%), Vietnamese (3%), and Mandarin (3%). Gujarati, Urdu, French, Hindi, and Tagalog were each reported by 2% of participants.

Top first languages spoken (long survey only)	# of participants	% of participants
Spanish	59	16%
Arabic	58	16%
English	54	15%
Persian/Farsi	43	12%
Portuguese	18	5%
Punjabi	13	4%
Ukrainian	11	3%
Vietnamese	11	3%
Mandarin	10	3%
Gujarati	9	2%
Urdu	9	2%
French	7	2%
Hindi	7	2%
Tagalog	7	2%
Other	52	14%
TOTAL	368	100%

English language fluency

Nearly three-quarters of participants reported that they spoke English “well” or “very well.” About 20% said they spoke English “fairly well,” 7% stated they spoke English “poorly,” and a small portion (2%) reported that they did not speak English at all.

Knowledge of English language	# of participants	% of participants
Very well	293	43%
Well	195	28%
Fairly well	132	19%
Poorly	51	7%
Not at all	15	2%
TOTAL	686	100%

In terms of knowledge of English by immigration category, economic class immigrants lead with 86% speaking English well or very well, closely followed by international students at 85%, and family class immigrants at 82%. Refugees (64%), refugee claimants (45%), and Ukrainian temporary residents (40%) were less likely to report speaking English very well or well compared to the above groups.

About 90% of respondents spoke more than one language, with one-third speaking three languages or more.

Number of languages spoken (long survey only)	# of participants	% of participants
One language	40	11%
Two languages	212	56%
Three languages	97	26%
Four languages	18	5%
Five or more languages	8	2%
TOTAL	375	100%

Highest level of education

Respondents were highly educated, with 72% having a Bachelor's degree or higher. Just over 43% had a Bachelor's degree, 24% had a Master's degree, and 5% had a PhD. Those with a high school diploma or equivalent represented 15%, and those with a college diploma were 11% of the participants.

Highest level of education (long survey only)	# of participants	% of participants
High school or equivalent	48	15%
Trade/technical school	6	2%
College diploma	37	11%
Bachelor's degree	142	43%
Master's degree	77	24%
PhD	15	5%
SUBTOTAL: Bachelor's degree or above	234	72%
TOTAL	325	100%

Employment status

Almost 70% of respondents were working, with 44% working full-time, 20% part-time or casual, and 3% self-employed. Nearly one-quarter of respondents were unemployed but actively seeking work, and 6% were not in the workforce (retired, caring for children, etc.). The "Other" category primarily included students.

Employment status (long survey only)	# of participants	% of participants
Working full time	137	44%
Working part time or casual	63	20%
Self-employed	8	3%
Unemployed but looking for work	72	23%
Not in the paid workforce	17	6%
Other	11	4%
TOTAL	308	100%

HOUSING AND INCOME

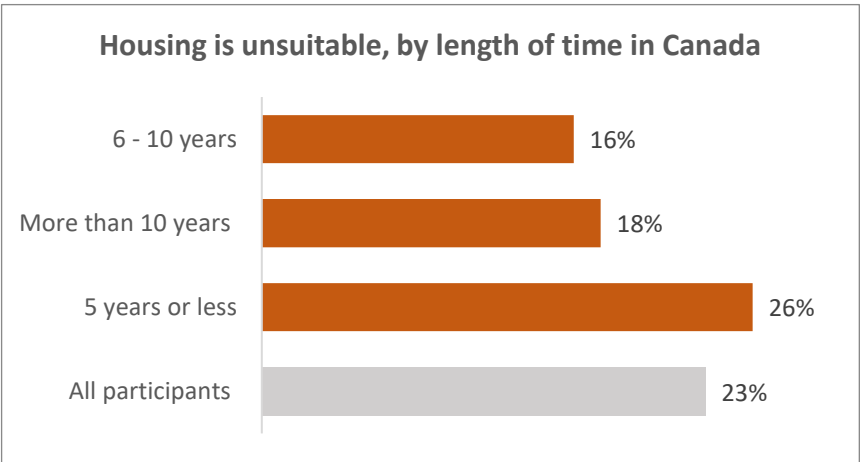
This section includes findings on housing suitability, housing affordability and income adequacy.

Housing suitability

Almost one-quarter of participants (23%) reported living in housing that did not suit their needs. In this survey, unsuitable refers to housing that is overcrowded and needs repair or maintenance. Some groups of immigrants were more likely to report living in unsuitable housing. The most commonly stated reasons for housing unsuitability related to the lack of access and availability of permanent housing, substandard living conditions, and overcrowded living spaces.

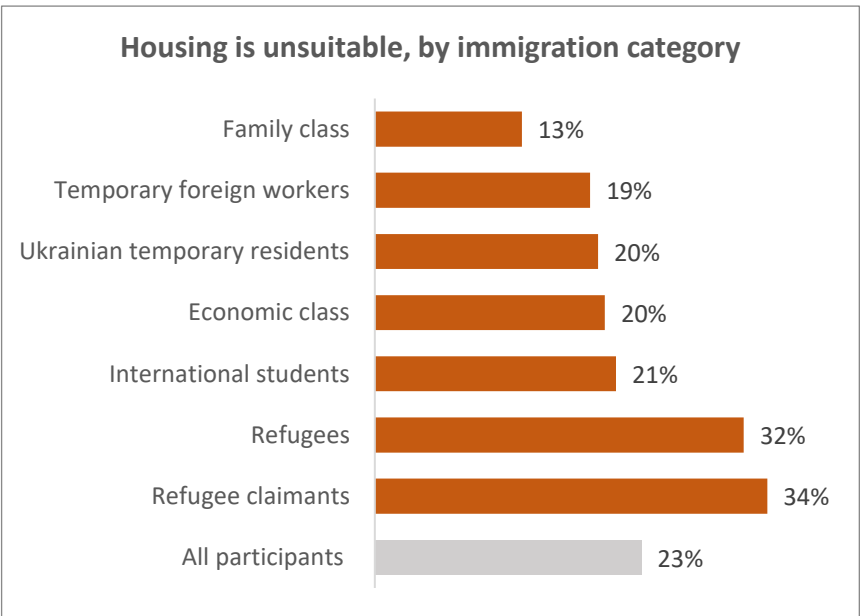
Housing suitability, by length of time in Canada

When examined based on the length of stay in Canada, newcomer participants (arrived 5 years ago or less) were more likely to experience unsuitable housing situations, with 26% living in unsuitable accommodations, compared to immigrants who have been in Canada for 6-10 years or 10 or more years.



Housing suitability, by immigration category

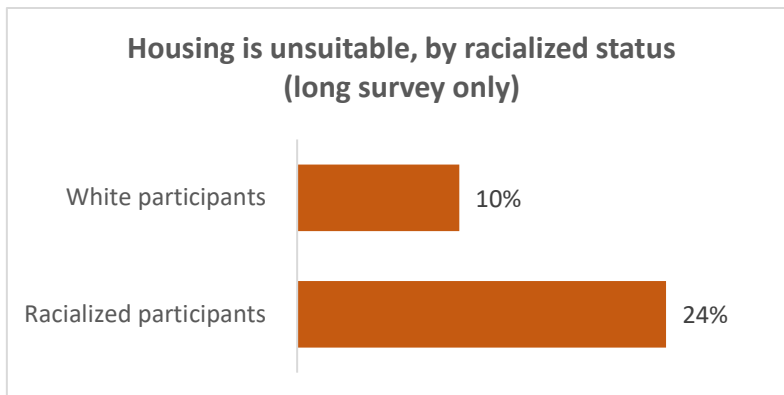
When examined by immigration category, refugee claimants were most likely to experience unsuitable housing conditions, followed by refugees. In contrast, only 13% of family class immigrants reported living in unsuitable housing. Temporary foreign workers, Ukrainian temporary residents economic class immigrants, and international students had relatively similar outcomes, with 19% to 20% reporting that they lived in unsuitable housing.



Housing suitability, by racialized status

Almost a quarter of racialized participants said they were living in unsuitable housing. In contrast, only 10% of white participants faced the same conditions.

It is worth reiterating that participants were asked about belonging to a racialized group only in the long survey.



The comparison by gender revealed some differences. Among respondents, 24% of men and 20% of women reported living in unsuitable housing.

Survey Participants on Housing Suitability

"I live in a place that doesn't even allow me to move forward with my physical and mental health. It is not in line with my needs."

"Poor condition of building, and especially bug infestation issues even after treatments"

"Our house doesn't have cooling system and our landlord didn't mention this when we were renting the house."

"We are currently five people, but we have one room."

"Rent is so high for private room. It is so small. Even washroom is bigger than my room."

"We live in 1-bedroom apartment even we are a 5-members family. Rent is too high. We can't move to a big apartment. Our building is very old. Maintenance is very poor. Management don't care to tenant's complaints."

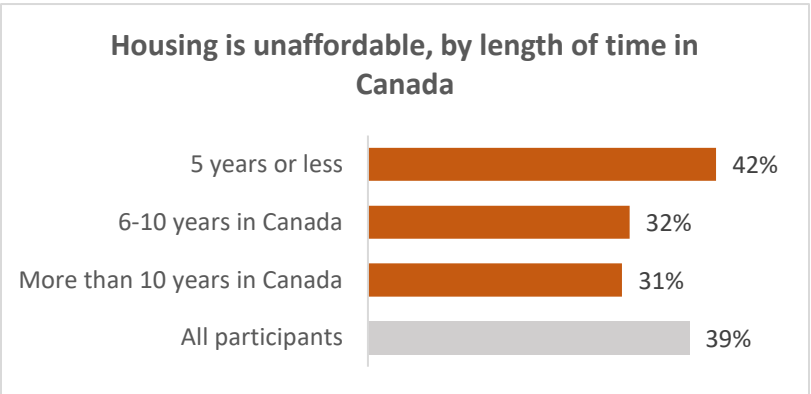
"I am currently living in transitional housing so everything is limited."

Housing affordability

About 4 in 10 respondents reported living in unaffordable housing. Housing is considered unaffordable if it costs more than 30% of a household's before-tax income. Among various groups of immigrants who were surveyed, the largest differences in outcomes were observed in length of stay in Canada and immigration category.

Housing affordability, by length of time in Canada

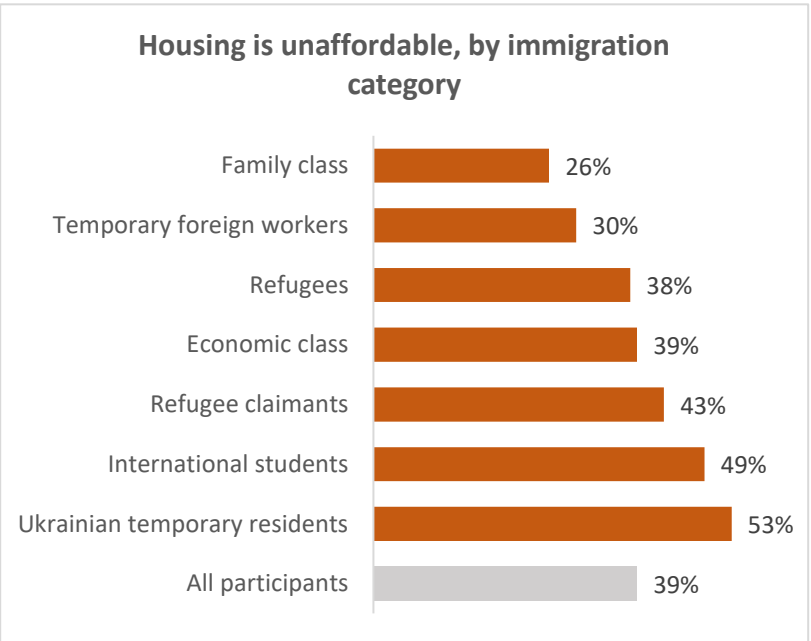
When looking at unaffordable housing in relation to the length of stay in Canada, newcomers (lived in Canada 5 years or less) had the highest rate, with 42% living in unaffordable housing. This is compared to 32% of those who have been here 6-10 years and 31% of those who have been here for more than 10 years.



Housing affordability, by immigration category

Considering immigration category, Ukrainian temporary residents were most likely (53%) to report living in unaffordable accommodations, followed closely by international students (49%). Refugee claimants, at 43%, were the third group to have rates above average.² Among refugees and economic class immigrants, 38% and 39% reported living in unaffordable housing respectively.

Family class respondents had the most favorable outcome with just over a quarter of participants facing unaffordable housing conditions, followed by one-third of temporary foreign workers.³



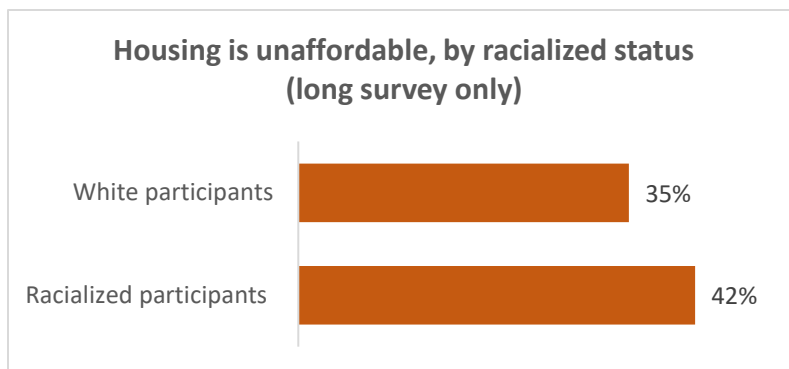
² Due to the small sample of refugee claimants, the results must be interpreted with caution.

³ Due to the small sample of temporary foreign workers, the results must be interpreted with caution.

Housing affordability, by racialized status

Racialized participants (42%) were more likely to live in unaffordable housing compared to white participants (35%).

No differences were observed when comparing men and women as 40% of women and 41% of men reported that their housing was unaffordable.



Among respondents who provided qualitative feedback to the question about housing affordability, many reported spending more than half of their income on housing, and some reported spending a staggering 80% or 90% on housing.

Survey Participants on the Cost of Living

"Taxes, mortgage, utilities end up consuming all my salary leaving nothing for groceries and other expenses."

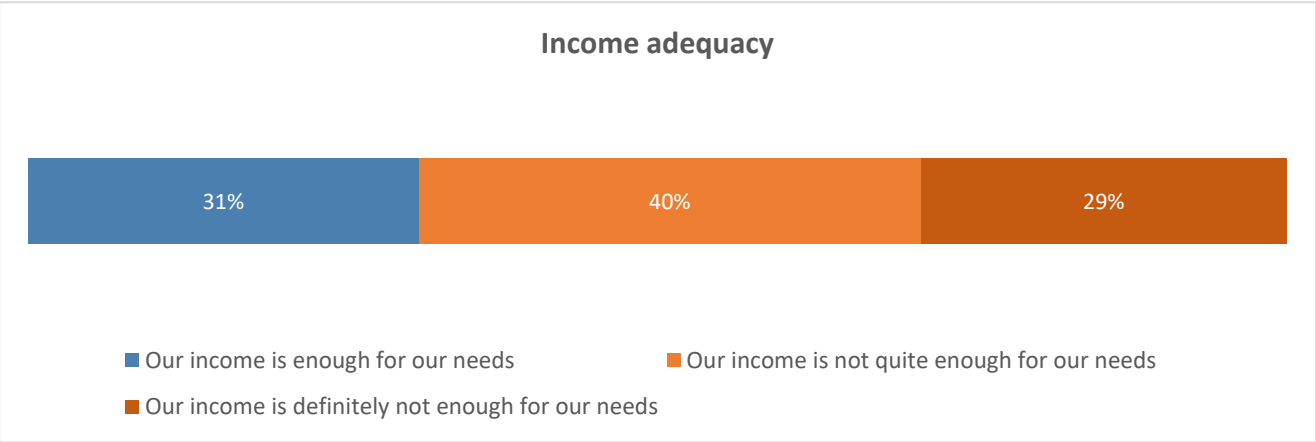
"The housing costs in Hamilton is unbelievably high and it increases every year significantly."

"My salary and my husband's salary, along with the children's salary, are \$3,200. My house is rented at \$2,600."

"Not affordable at all, considering moving to another country, can barely afford to rent, never mind to buy."

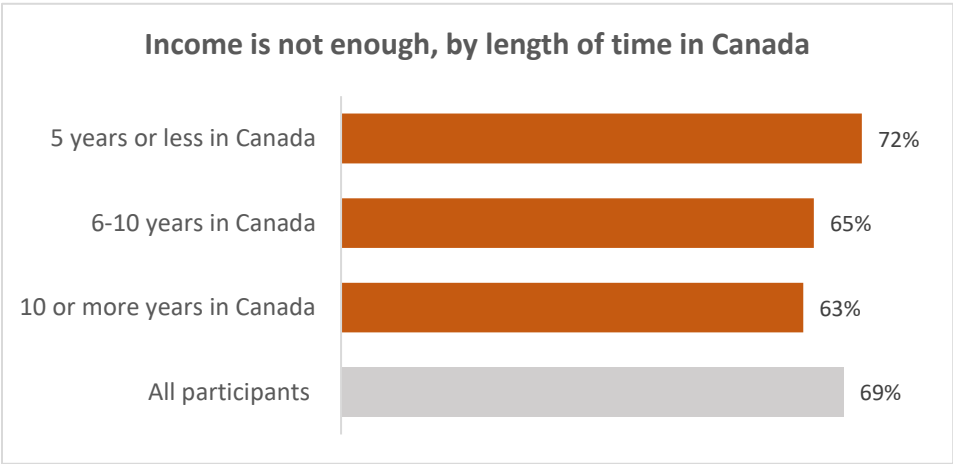
Income adequacy

The survey asked participants if their income was sufficient for their needs. About one-third (31%) stated that their income was sufficient for their needs. However, 40% said that their income was “not quite enough” for their needs and 29% said that their income was “definitely not enough” to meet their needs.



Income adequacy, by subgroup

About 70% of all participants said that their income was inadequate.⁴ The comparison based on length of stay in Canada reveal that newcomer participants were more likely to report that their income was not enough than those who have been in Canada for 6-10 years or 10 years or more.

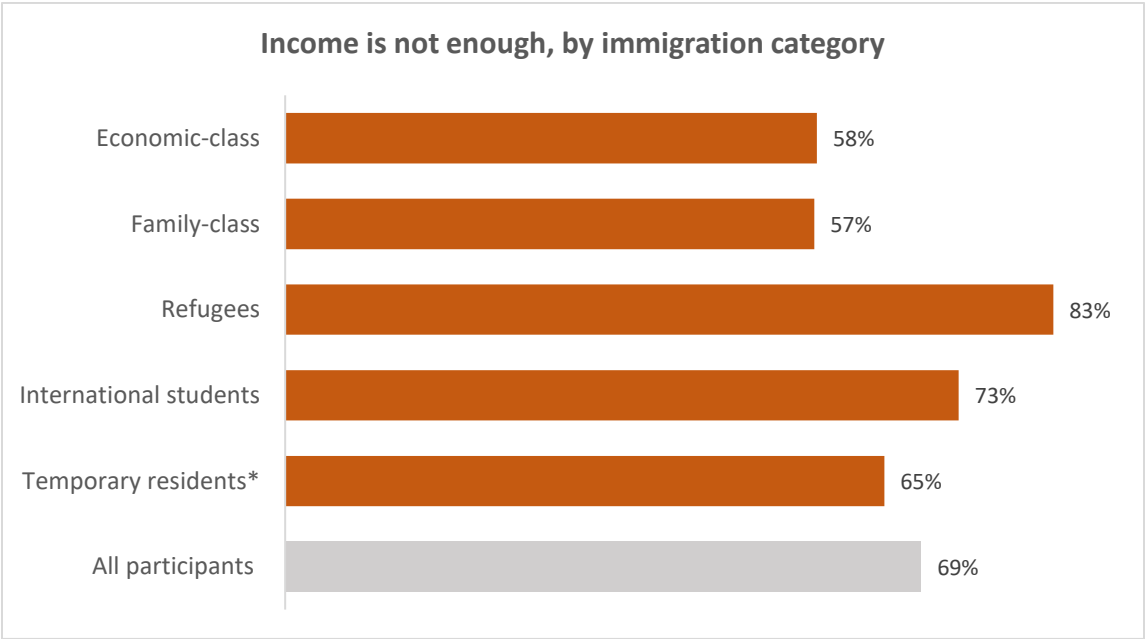


When examining income inadequacy based on immigration category, distinct patterns were observed:

Refugees were most likely to face income inadequacy, with 83% reporting that their income was not enough for their needs, followed by international students at 73%. Nearly 60% of family class and economic class immigrants reported that their income was inadequate. A slightly lower proportion of temporary residents

⁴ Income inadequacy refers to response categories: “income is not quite enough for our needs” and “income is definitely not enough for our needs”

(temporary foreign workers, Ukrainian temporary residents and refugee claimants) reported their income was inadequate⁵.



*Temporary residents in this chart include refugee claimants, temporary foreign workers and Ukrainian temporary residents.

When looking at income inadequacy by racialized status, there were no substantial differences between racialized and white respondents. However, when considering severe income inadequacy,⁶ racialized individuals were slightly more likely (30%) to report their income was “definitely not enough” compared to their white counterparts (25%).

No differences were observed between men and women respondents, but women were slightly more likely to report severe income inadequacy (30%) compared to men (27%).

⁵ Due to small sample sizes, the three groups were combined into one category. This finding should be interpreted with caution as there are differences across the three groups when it comes to their immigration pathway and experiences, employment status and access to settlement services.

⁶ Severe income inadequacy refers to the response category: “income is definitely not enough for our needs”.

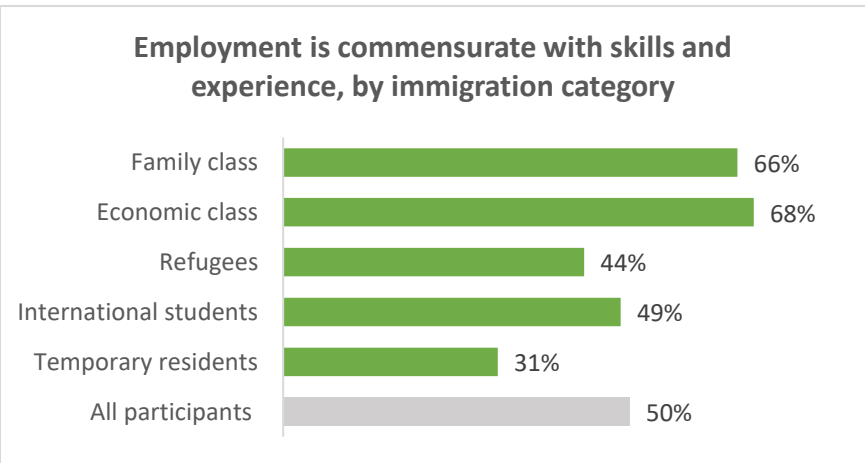
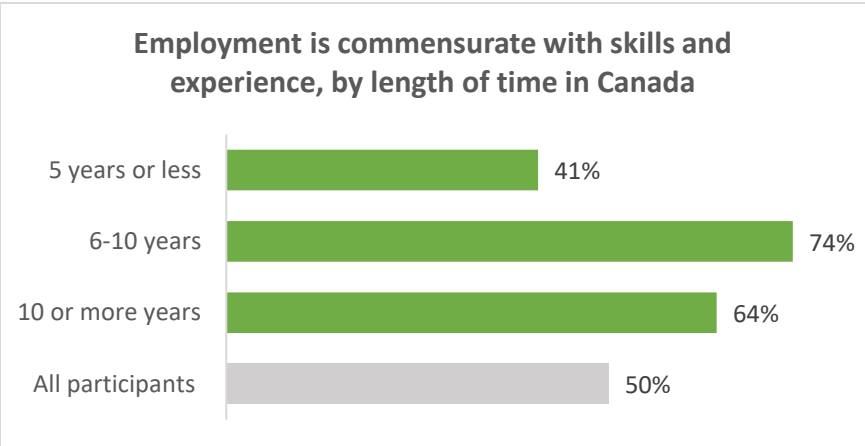
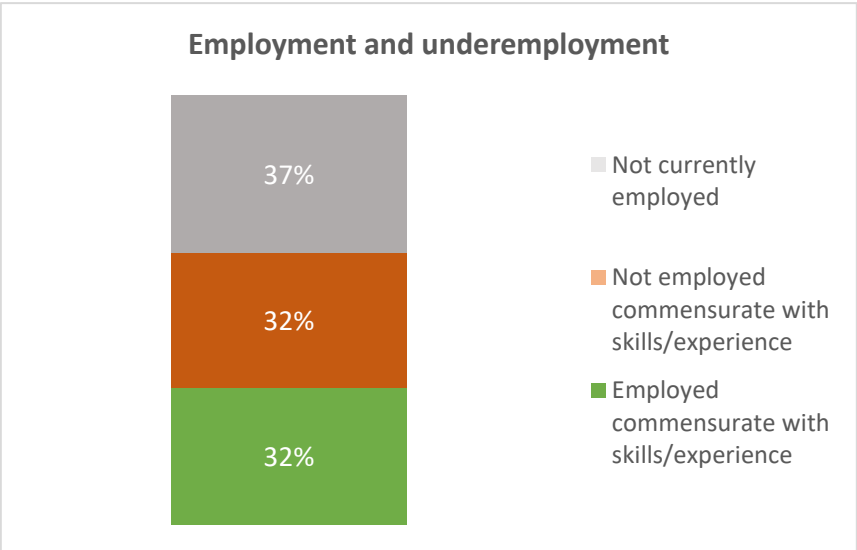
EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Participants were asked about their employment experiences, and 32% stated they were employed commensurate with their skills and experience, while an equal proportion (32%) reported that they were not. Meanwhile, 37% of the participants reported that they were not employed at the time.

Among respondents who reported that they were working, 50% believed they were employed in roles that aligned with their skills and experience.

Of those who have been in Canada for less than 5 years, 41% felt their employment matched their qualifications. Among individuals who have been in Canada for 10 or more years, 64% found their jobs commensurate with their skills. Those who have lived in Canada between 6 to 10 years were most likely to report they were employed commensurate with their skills and experience at 74%.

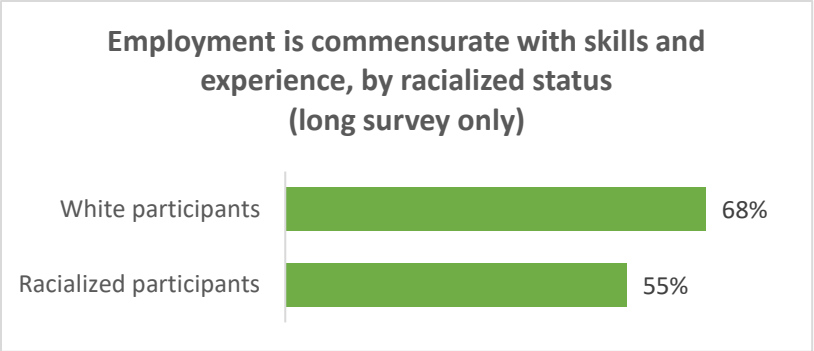
Temporary residents⁷ were least likely to report they were employed commensurate with their skills and experience at 31%. They were followed by refugees at 44% and international students at 49%. Economic class and family class immigrants had higher rates of employment commensurate with their skills and experience at 68% and 66% respectively.



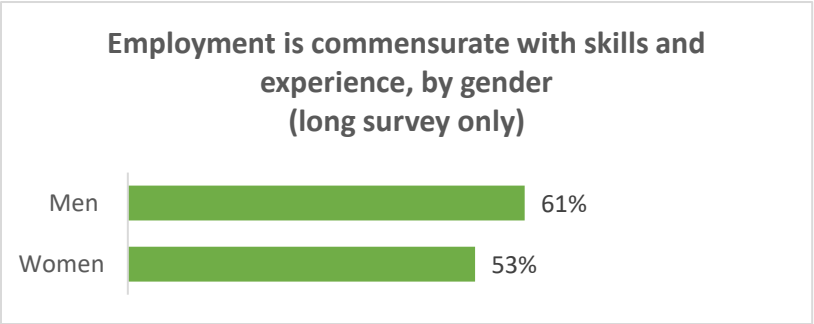
⁷ Encompassing temporary foreign workers, Ukrainian temporary residents, refugee claimants

The following charts show the results for participants based on racialized status, gender and level of education. It should be noted that the sample of respondents in these charts include only those who responded to the long survey. Generally, long survey respondents had higher levels of education, better employment outcomes and higher levels of English language proficiency than short survey respondents.

Underemployment experiences by racialized status reveal that among those who were working, racialized participants were less likely to report being in jobs that matched their qualifications and experience (55%) compared to white participants (68%).



In terms of the outcomes across genders among employed participants, a higher proportion of men (61%) said they were employed in jobs that aligned with their qualifications than women (53%).



When examining underemployment rates by level of education, college diploma holders were most likely to report they were employed commensurate with their skills and experience (71%), followed by high school graduates (67%) and graduate degree holders (66%). Those with a Bachelor's degree had the lowest rate (52%) of employment commensurate with their skills and experience.



Finally, there were differences between groups with lower and higher English language proficiency. Among those with lower levels of English, only 26% said that they were employed in jobs that were at the same level as their skills and experience compared to 52%% of those with higher levels of English.

WELL-BEING

The following section includes findings on four well-being indicators, including life satisfaction, sense of belonging, feelings of isolation and feelings of safety. Generally, results show positive outcomes across all indicators except in responses related feelings of isolation.

Life satisfaction

Participants were asked to rate their life satisfaction on a scale of 0-10 (0 being very dissatisfied and 10 being very satisfied). Nearly one-third (31%) said that they were quite satisfied with their lives, rating it between 8-10, 46% somewhat satisfied (5-7), and 23% “dissatisfied” (0 to 4).

How satisfied are you with your life? (0-10 scale)	% of respondents	
10 (very satisfied)	11%	31% - quite satisfied
9	7%	
8	14%	
7	16%	46% - somewhat satisfied
6	15%	
5	16%	
4	7%	23% - dissatisfied
3	6%	
2	5%	
1	2%	
0 (very dissatisfied)	2%	

There were no substantial differences across groups by length of time in Canada. Similar proportions of newcomers (31%), those in Canada between 6-10 years (28%) and those who have been in Canada for more than 10 years (34%) reported that they were quite satisfied with their lives.

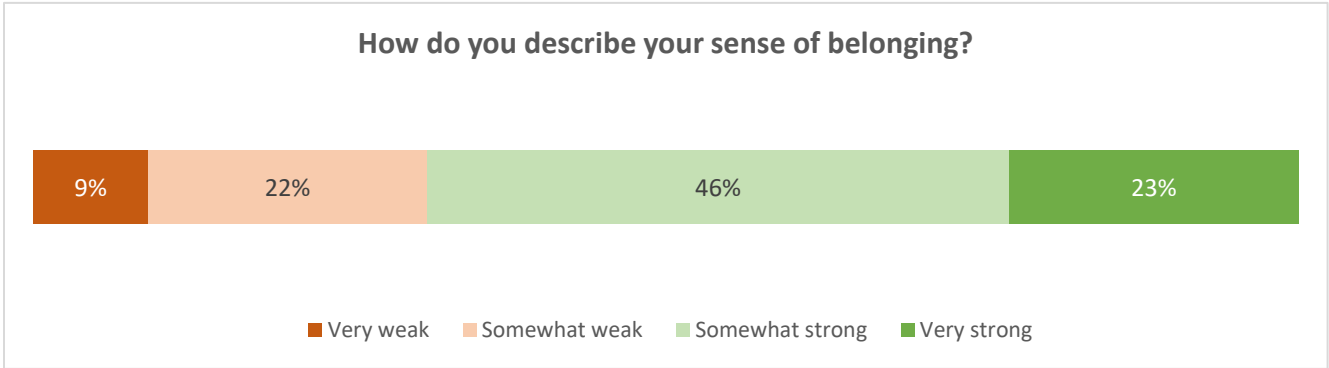
When comparing respondents by immigration category, temporary foreign workers (22%) and refugee claimants (24%) were least likely to report being quite satisfied with their lives. Family class (37%) and international students (36%) were most likely to report being quite satisfied with their lives. Other groups, including refugees, economic class immigrants and Ukrainian temporary workers had similar proportions of those who were quite satisfied with their lives (30% and 28% respectively). In addition, family class immigrants had the lowest proportion of those who were dissatisfied with their lives (11%), and refugee claimants had the highest proportion (38%).

When comparing participants by racialized status, a bigger proportion of racialized participants reported that they were dissatisfied with their lives than white participants (23% vs. 14%).

Finally, there were no differences between women and men when it came to life satisfaction, except women reported experiencing a marginally lower rate of poor life satisfaction than men (20% vs. 23%) and a slightly higher rate of moderate satisfaction (49% vs. 46%).

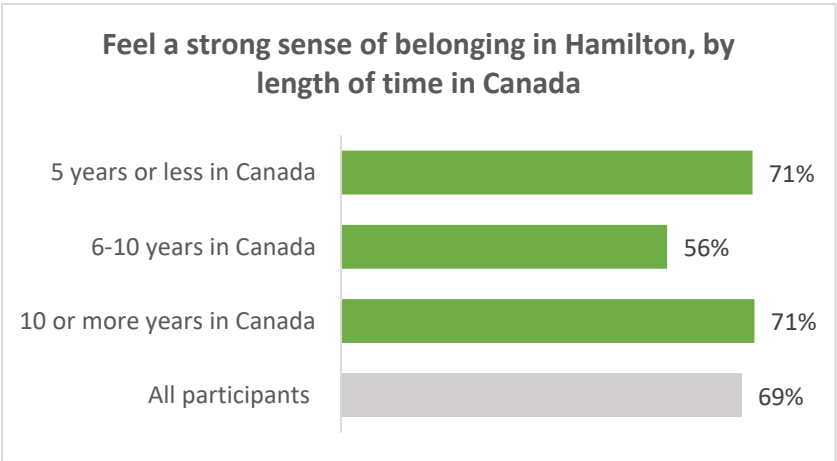
Sense of belonging

Participants were asked about their sense of belonging in Hamilton, and the responses showed a broad spectrum of feelings. About 70% of participants reported having a strong sense of belonging in Hamilton with nearly one-quarter (23%) describing it as "very strong" and 46% as "somewhat strong." In addition, 31% of participants reported having a weak sense of belonging, with 22% describing it as "somewhat weak" and 9% as "very weak."



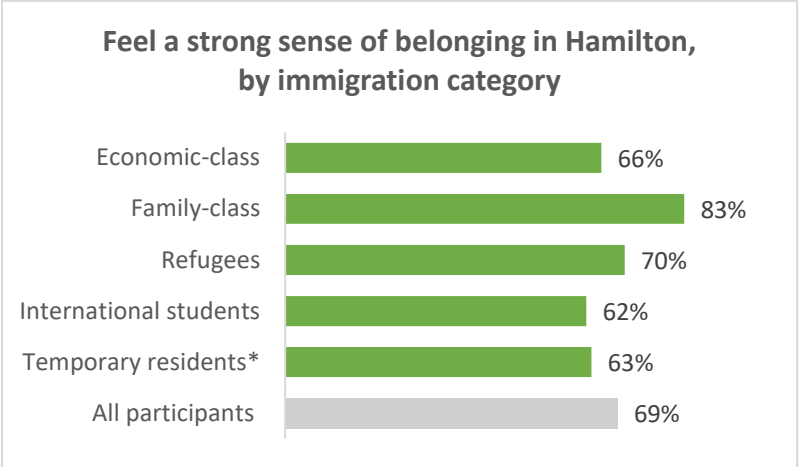
Sense of belonging, by subgroup

The comparison of results by length of stay in Canada revealed immigrants who have lived in Canada for more than 6 years but less than 10 had the weakest sense of belonging. Within this group, 56 % reported a strong sense of belonging⁸ compared to 71% of newcomers (those who have been in Canada for 5 years or less) and 71% of participants who have been in Canada for more than 10 years.

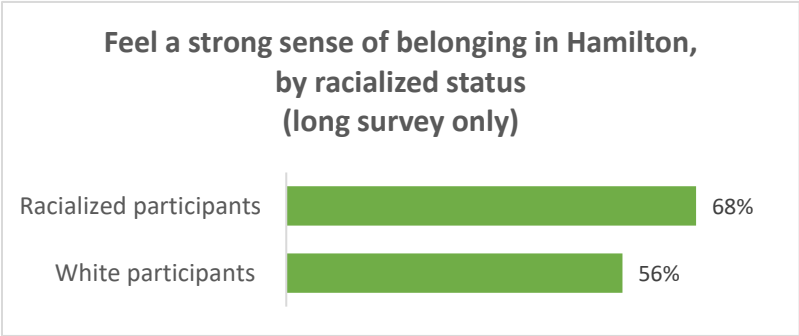


⁸ "strong sense of belonging" refers to response categories: "somewhat strong" and "very strong".

When compared by immigration category, the group with the most favorable outcomes was the family class category, with 83% of respondents describing either a “very” or “somewhat” strong sense of belonging in Hamilton. They were followed by refugees at 70%. Economic class immigrants, temporary residents and international students had smaller proportion of those with strong sense of belonging at 65% and 63%.



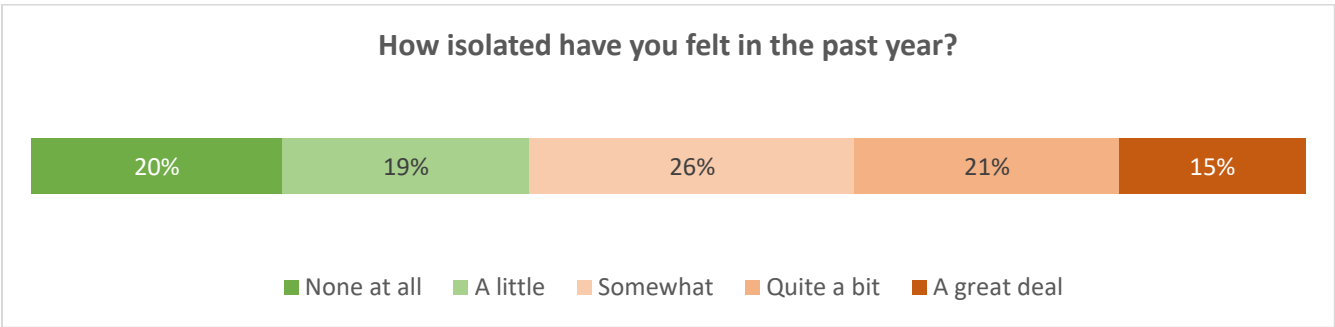
Racialized participants (68%) were more likely to describe their sense of belonging in Hamilton as either “very” or “somewhat” strong compared to white participants (56%).



However, when compared by gender, men and women reported relatively similar sense of belonging. 66% of women and 64% of men reported that they felt a strong sense of belonging in Hamilton.

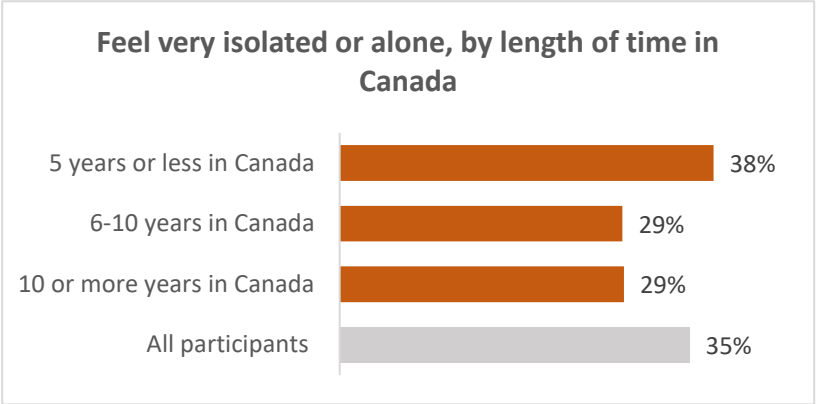
Feelings of isolation

Feeling of isolation was prominent among survey participants with over one-third (35%) having felt isolated/alone “quite a bit” or “a great deal” over the past year. Only 20% said they didn’t feel isolated at all, and a nearly equal percentage, 19%, said they felt “a little” isolated. Just over one-quarter of participants (26%) reported that they felt “somewhat” isolated in the past year.

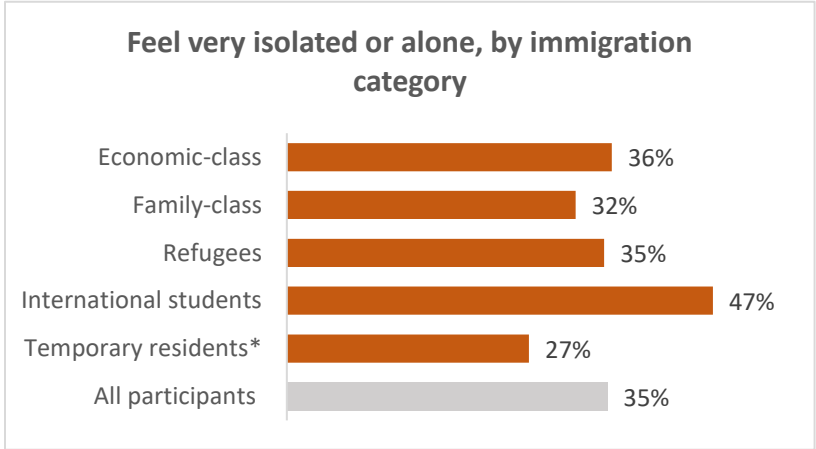


Feelings of isolation, by subgroup

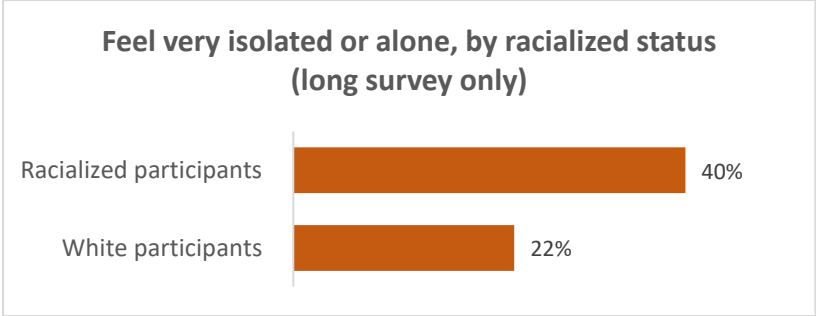
When compared by length of time in Canada, newcomers, at 38%, were more likely to feel “a great deal” or “quite a bit” isolated compared to 29% of immigrants who have lived in Canada 6-10 years and more long-term immigrants.



Feelings of isolation varied slightly across various immigration categories, with international students (at 47%) reporting the highest rates of feeling very isolated or alone in the past year. They were followed by economic class immigrants at 36%, refugees at 35%, family class immigrants at 32%, and temporary residents at 27%.



Racialized participants reported feeling isolated at substantially higher rates than white participants. Specifically, 40% of participants from this group felt isolated “a great deal” or “quite a bit,” compared to 22% of white participants.

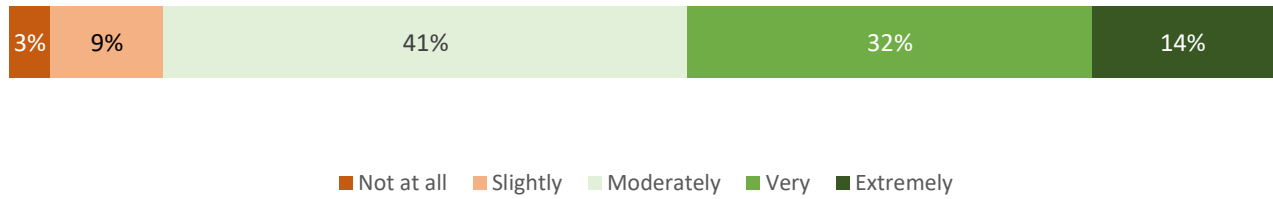


When compared by gender, there were no substantial differences between women (36%) and men (38%) who reported feeling very isolated in the past year.

Feelings of safety

Regarding how safe they felt, participants’ responses showcased a range of sentiments. A modest 14% of participants indicated feeling “extremely safe” in the city. A larger proportion, 32%, felt “very safe”, while 41% said they felt “moderately safe”. In addition, 9% of participants reported they felt “slightly” safe and 3% reported “not feeling safe at all” in Hamilton. Overall, the majority of participants leaned towards a positive perception of safety in Hamilton.

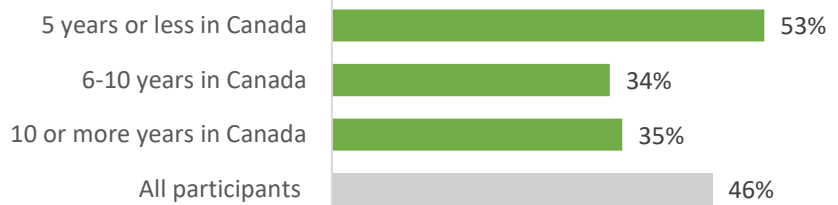
How safe do you feel in Hamilton?



Feelings of safety, by subgroup

When positive perceptions of safety are compared across participants' time in Canada, newcomers were more likely to report feeling either "extremely" or "very" safe in Hamilton compared to immigrants who have lived in Canada 6-10 years and more than 10 years.

Feel very safe in Hamilton, by length of time in Canada



Positive feelings of safety varied slightly across immigration categories as well. International students (53%) were most likely to report feeling "extremely" or "very" safe. They were followed by temporary residents at 50%, economic class and family class immigrants at 44% each, and refugees at 42%.

Feel very safe in Hamilton, by immigration category

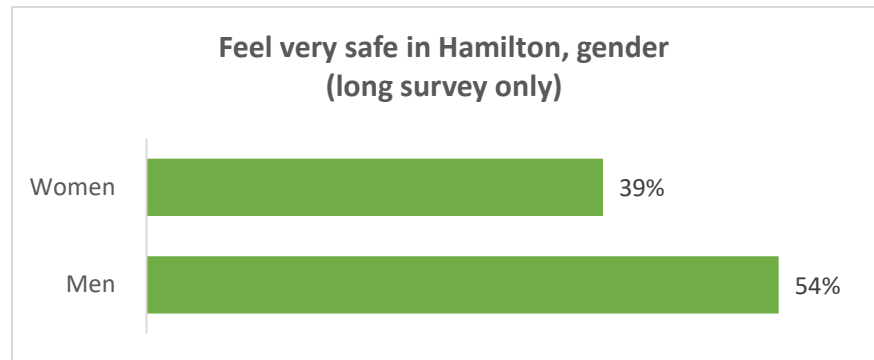


Racialized participants were notably more likely to rate their feelings of safety positively, with almost half of the respondents reporting feeling "very" or "extremely" safe in Hamilton compared to only one-third of white participants.

Feel very safe in Hamilton, racialized status (long survey only)



Finally, men (at 54%) were more likely to report feeling very safe in Hamilton compared to 39% of women participants.



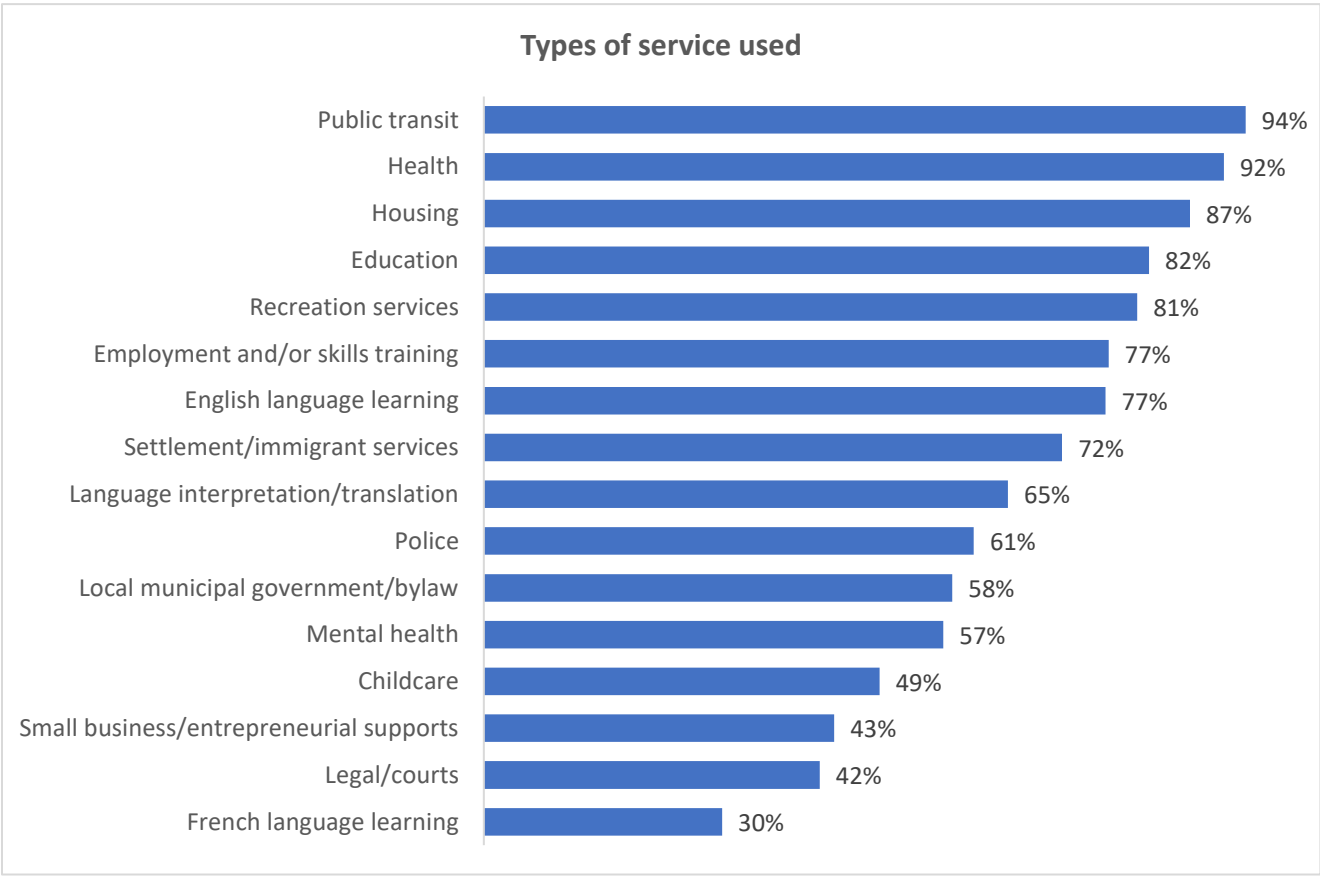
SERVICE USE

Almost all participants reported that they had used at least one of the services listed in the survey in the past year. Public transit was the most accessed service, with 94% of participants utilizing it. This was closely followed by health at 92%, housing at 87%, education at 82%, and recreation services at 81%.

The least accessed service was French language learning, with only 30% of participants reporting to have used it. Legal or courts services were accessed by 42% of participants, small business or entrepreneurial supports by 43%, childcare services by 49%, and mental health services by 57% of the respondents.

Over 70% of participants had used settlement services, and 77% had used English language learning. A higher proportion of newcomers and refugees had used settlement services and English learning programs, emphasizing the essential role these services play in their settlement.

Notably, when assessing service usage patterns based on gender, in general a higher proportion of men reported using the services compared to women. In addition, the top service used by men was public transit whereas women’s top accessed service was health.



When asked about their preferred methods of obtaining information regarding community and settlement services, participants predominantly favoured email, information sessions, and community organization websites.

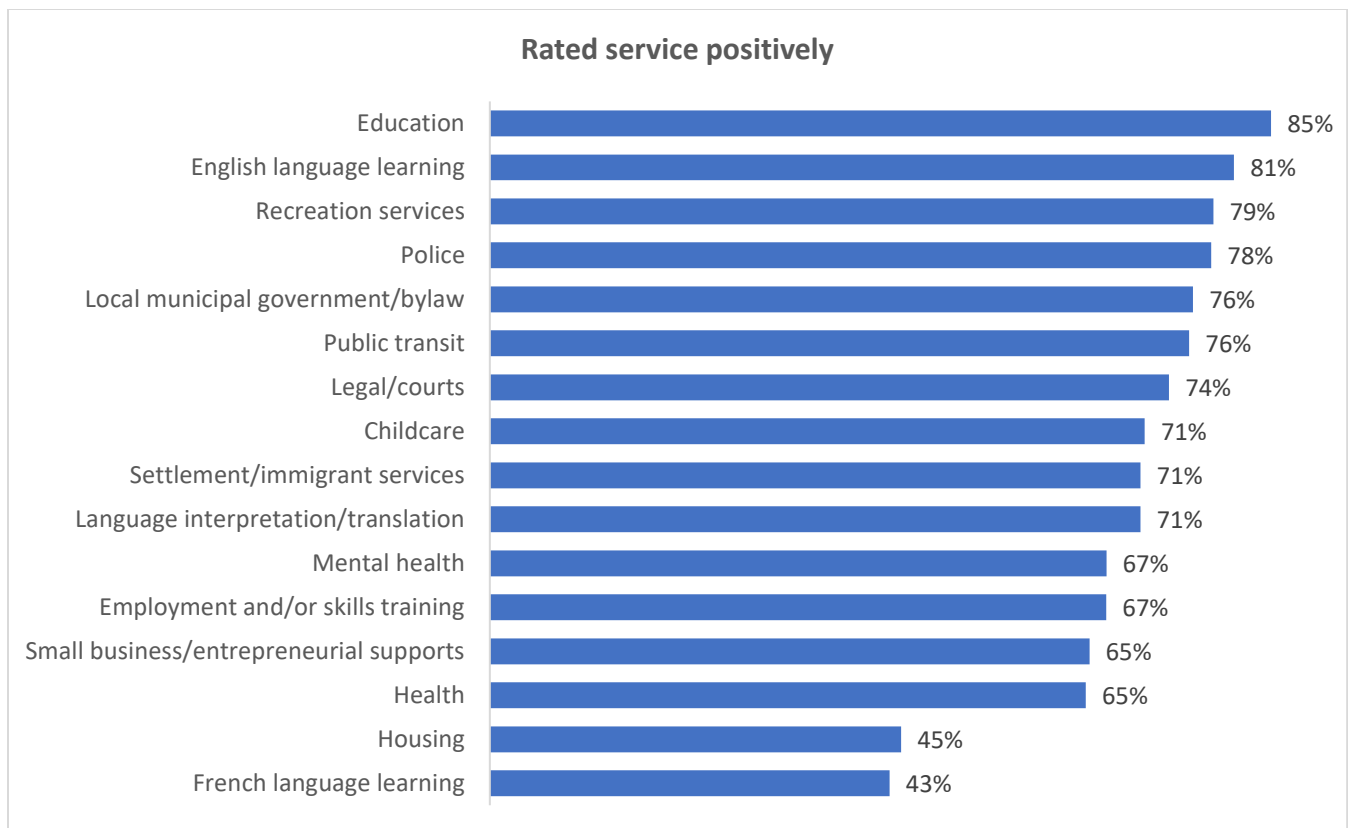
Where do you prefer to get information about community and settlement services?	# of participants	% of participants
Email	255	85%
Information sessions	222	82%
Community organization websites	224	80%
Settlement worker or other community organization staff	201	77%
Instagram	213	75%
HIPC website	197	74%
Local media (newspaper, radio)	208	73%
Hamilton Immigration Partnership (HIPC) newsletter ImmPress	192	70%
Facebook	193	68%
Messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp, Telegram, etc.)	184	68%
LinkedIn	179	67%
Twitter	127	48%

Service ratings

Participants rated most services positively. The highest-rated service was education, with 85% of participants rating it as “excellent,” “very good,” or “good,” followed by English language learning (81%), recreation services were (79%) and police services (78%). Public transit, local municipal government/bylaw and legal/court services were rated positively by around three quarters of the participants.

The services with the lowest percentage of participants rating them positively were French language learning and housing (43% and 45% respectively).

Health and small business/entrepreneurial supports each received positive ratings from 65% of the participants. Employment and/or skills training, mental health, language interpretation/translation, settlement/immigrant services, and childcare all were positively rated by 67% to 71% of respondents.



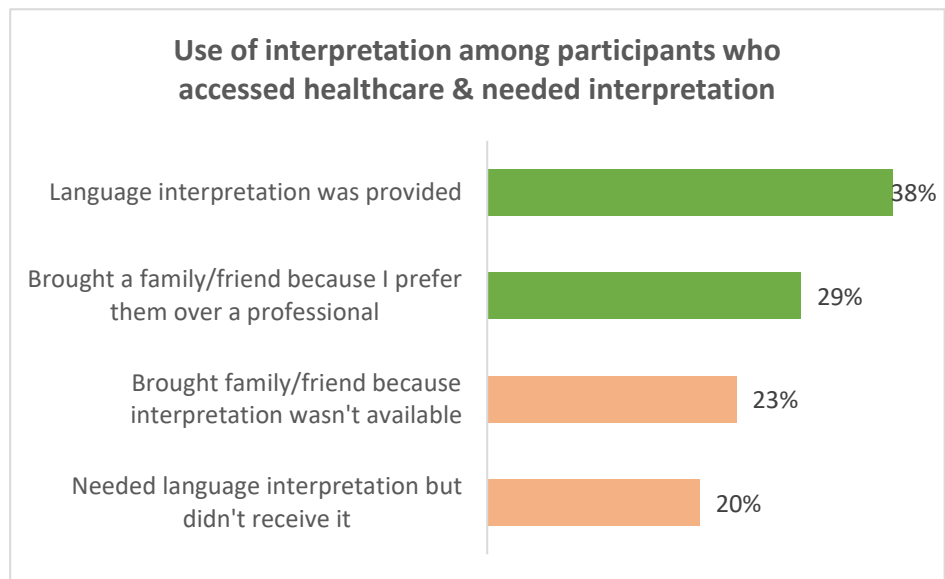
Interpretation

Access to language interpretation in healthcare settings has been an issue that many Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) across Canada have tried to address locally. This survey attempted to better understand to what extent interpretation is accessed among immigrants in Hamilton.

Among participants, 27% said that they did not need interpretation and 34% said that they did not go to a hospital, clinic or healthcare professional in the past year.

However, among those who did access interpretation, 43% did not receive this service and had to bring a family member or friend to interpret for them. Nearly 4 in 10 reported that they did receive interpretation and about 30% said that they relied a family member or friend for interpretation because that is what they preferred.

Please note that participants could choose more than one option.



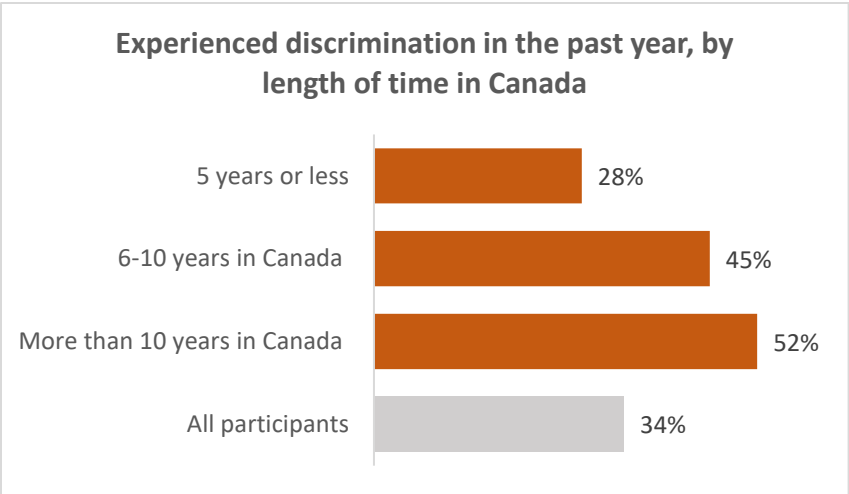
DISCRIMINATION

Over one-third (34%) of all participants reported experiencing discrimination in the past year. Refugee claimants, newcomers, temporary foreign workers, racialized individuals, and refugees were the groups most likely to report such experiences. A previous HIPC-commissioned survey (2021) found that about six in 10 immigrants and racialized persons experienced Hamilton over the three years prior to the survey.⁹

Experiences of discrimination, by length of stay in Canada

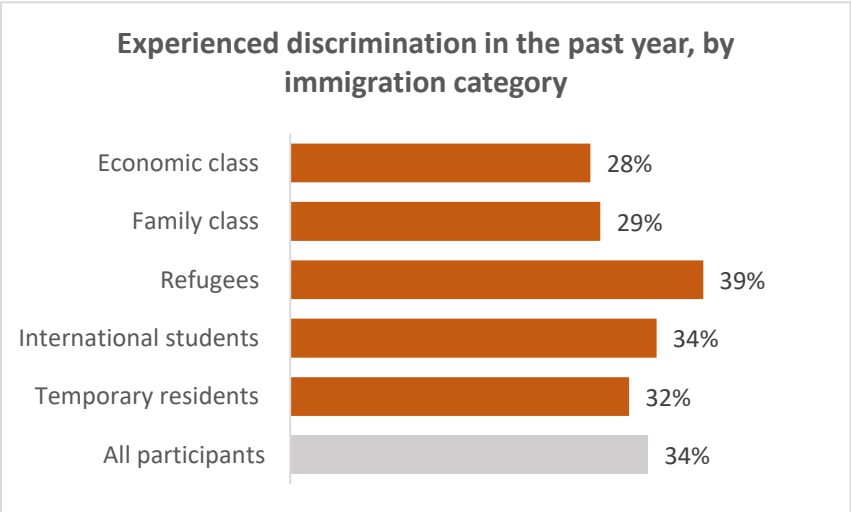
The proportion of participants who experienced discrimination varies by length of time in Canada. Long-term immigrants were more likely to report experiencing discrimination (52%) than those who have been in Canada 6-10 years (45%) and newcomers who have been in Canada for 5 years or less (28%).

Many newcomer respondents were people in Canada less than one year, and who therefore may not have interacted with various systems and institutions as much as long-term immigrants.



Experiences of discrimination, by immigration category

Refugees were most likely to report experiencing discrimination within the past year (39%). International students followed at 34% and temporary residents at 32%. A lower percentage of family class and economic class immigrants reported experiences of discrimination (at 29% and 28% respectively).

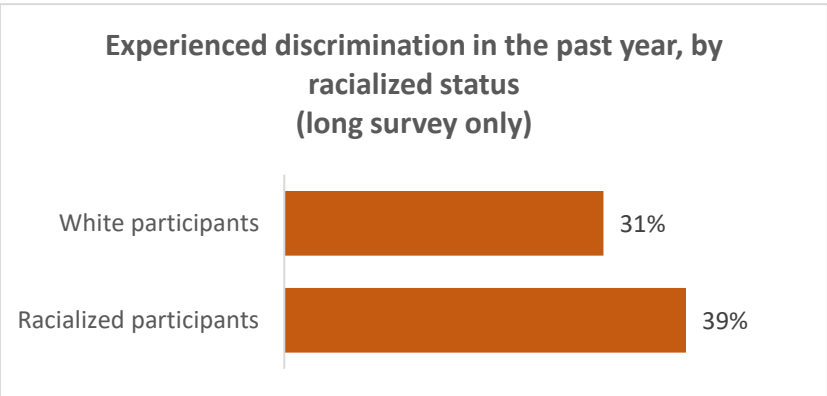


⁹ Sutter, A. & Esses, V. (September 2021). *Discrimination Experienced by Immigrants, Visible Minorities, and Indigenous Peoples in Hamilton An Empirical Study by the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council.*
https://hamiltonimmigration.ca/wp-content/uploads/HIPC-Discrimination-Experiences-Report_Revised.pdf

Experiences of discrimination, by racialized status

There was a notable difference between racialized and white participants. Racialized participants reported a higher rate of discrimination at 39%, in contrast to 31% of white participants.

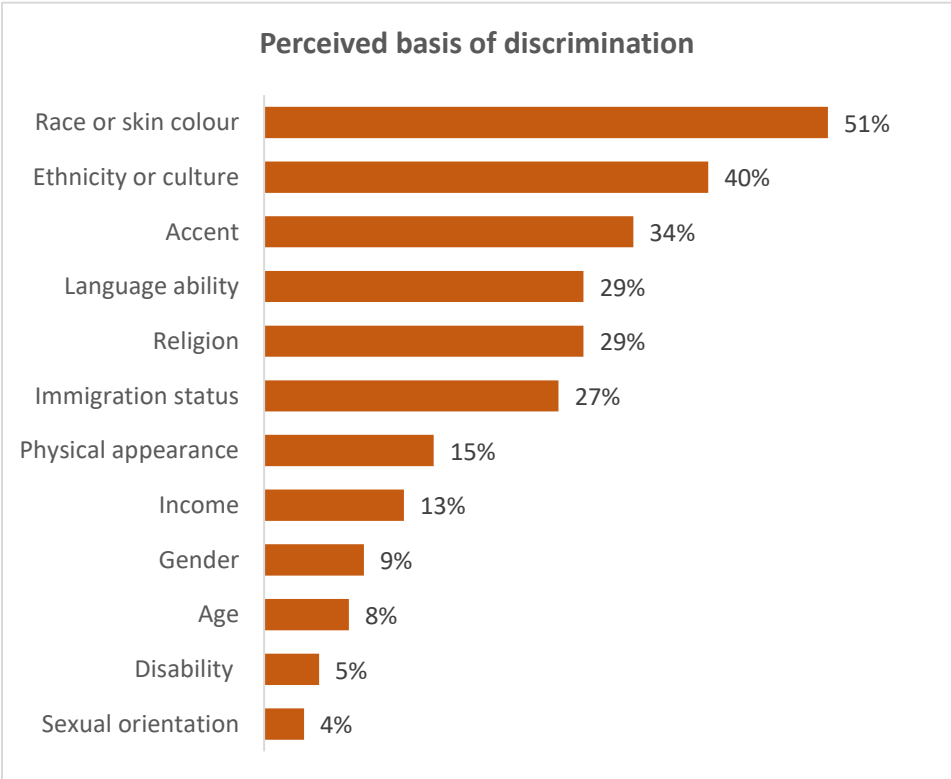
No differences were observed between men and women, with 37% of each group reporting experience of discrimination.



Perceived bases for discrimination

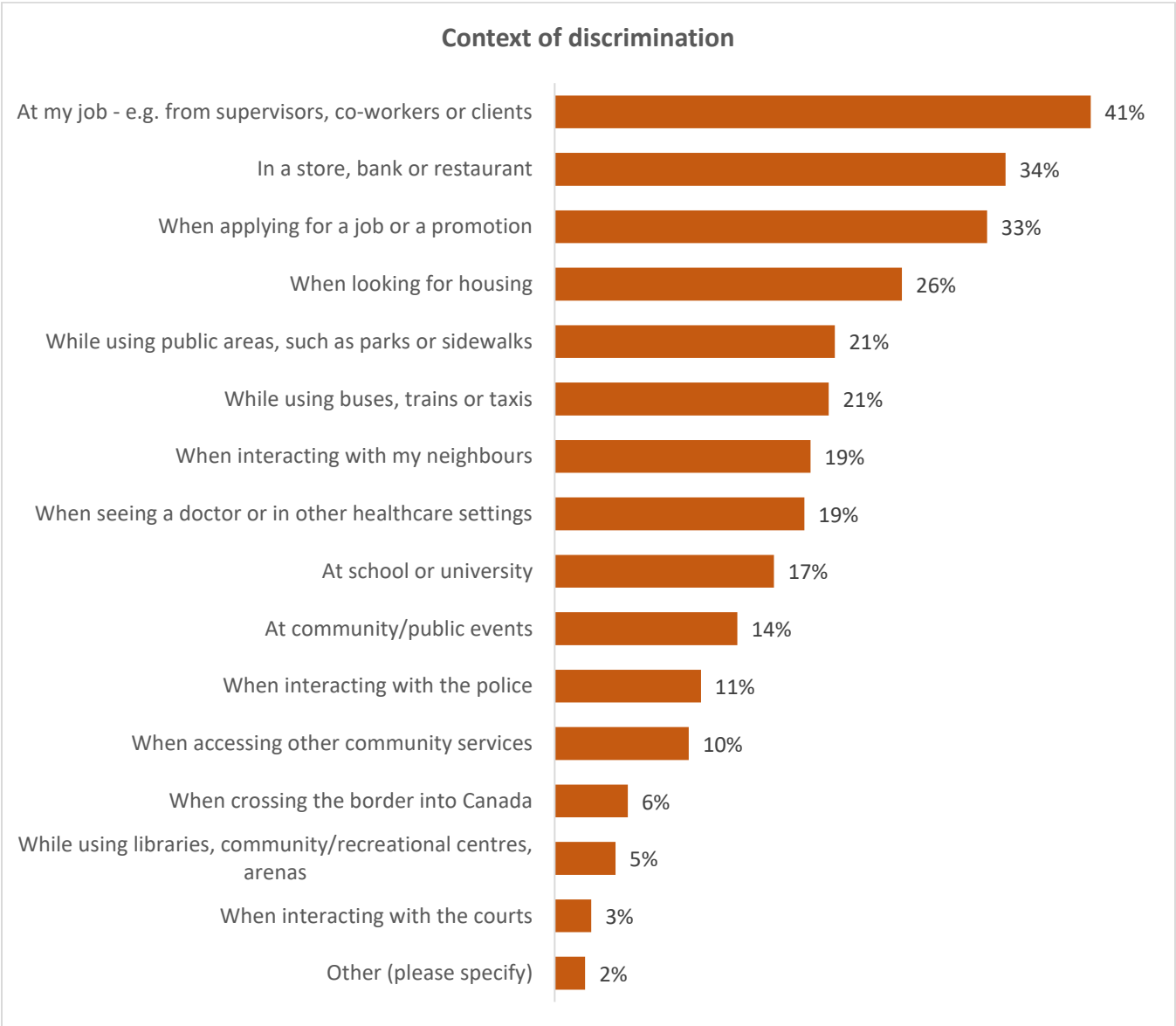
Participants experienced discrimination based on all factors mentioned in the survey. However, the most frequently cited reason was race or skin colour, reported by just over half of participants. This was closely followed by discrimination due to ethnicity or cultural background, as reported by 40% of respondents. Other frequently stated bases of discrimination included accent, language ability, religious beliefs, and immigration status, as reported by between 27%-30% of respondents. Physical appearance, income, gender, age, disability, and sexual orientation were other reasons mentioned.

Race or skin colour was the top basis of discrimination among all immigrant groups, except for white participants who mostly cited accent or physical appearance other than skin colour. In addition, discrimination based on immigration status was more commonly cited by temporary residents and international students than others.



Discrimination contexts

Workplaces emerged as the most common setting where participants said they faced discrimination, with over 4 in 10 respondents stating they faced discrimination at their job from supervisors, co-workers, or clients. This was followed by experiences in everyday environments, with over one-third of participants reporting discrimination in places like stores, banks, or restaurants. In addition, one-third of participants said they experienced discrimination when applying for a job or promotion, and just over one-quarter reported experiencing discrimination when looking for housing.



HIPC’s 2021 discrimination survey showed similar findings with the top context of discrimination among immigrants being at workplaces. However, experiences of discrimination while using public areas and public transit were more frequently mentioned in the 2021 whereas this survey shows discrimination in a store, bank or restaurant and when looking for housing was more common.

COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

The following sections consist of findings on the experiences of participants integrating and settling in the community, specifically perceptions of Hamilton as a welcoming community, reasons for choosing to live/work/study in Hamilton, intention to stay permanently in Hamilton, and settlement experiences.

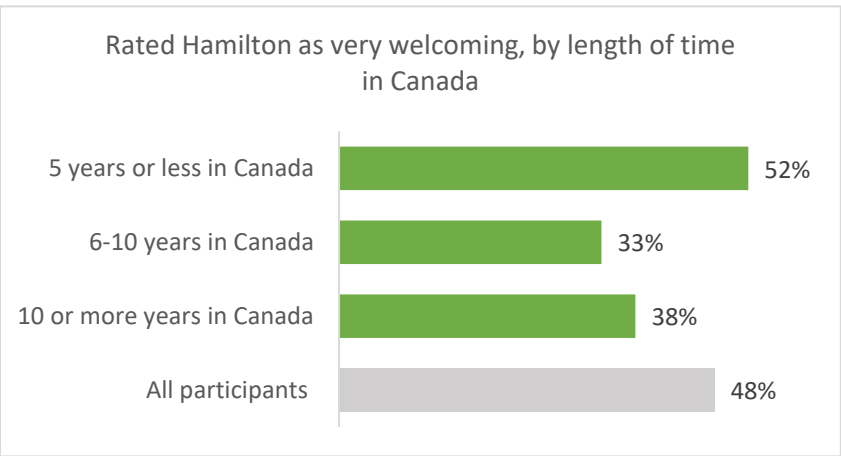
How welcoming is Hamilton?

Participants were asked to rate how welcoming Hamilton was toward immigrants on a scale of 0-10 (with 0 being very unwelcoming and 10 being very welcoming). Nearly half of the respondents (48%) reported Hamilton was quite welcoming toward immigrants, rating it 8-10. Over one-third of participants (34%) rated Hamilton as somewhat welcoming, and 18% viewed the city as not welcoming (rating it 0-4).

How welcoming is Hamilton to immigrants? (0-10 scale)	% of respondents	
10 (very welcoming)	24%	48% - quite welcoming
9	9%	
8	14%	
7	14%	34% - somewhat welcoming
6	9%	
5	12%	
4	7%	18% - not welcoming
3	4%	
2	5%	
1	2%	
0 (not welcoming at all)	1%	

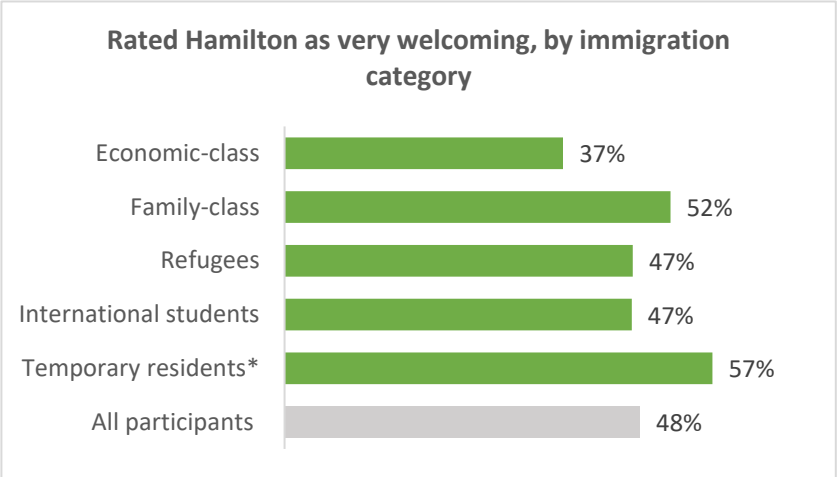
Community welcoming, by subgroup

When comparing by length of stay in Canada, newcomers were most likely to rate Hamilton as quite welcoming.¹⁰ This was in contrast with 33% of immigrants who have lived in Canada for 6-10 years and 38% of longer-term immigrants.

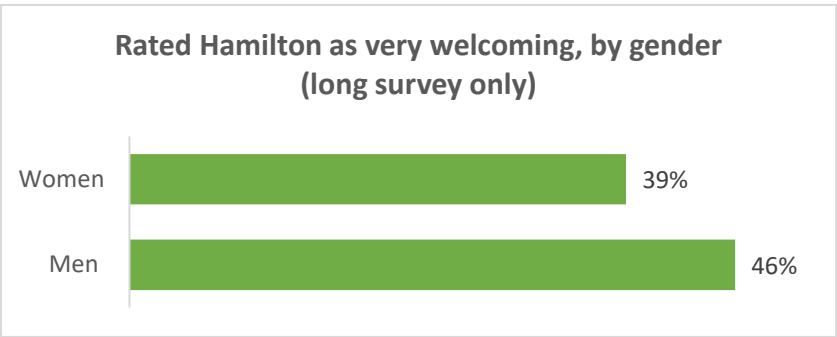


¹⁰ Quite welcoming refers to the rating between 8 and 10.

There were differences across groups by immigration category. Temporary residents were most likely to rate Hamilton as quite welcoming (57%), followed by family class immigrants (52%). Refugees and international students had similar rates to the overall average at 47%. The group with lowest likelihood of describing the community as quite welcoming was the economic class immigrants, with only 37% rating Hamilton between 8 and 10.



When comparing results by gender, women were less likely than men to describe Hamilton as quite welcoming (39% vs. 46%).



Finally, there were no differences between racialized and white participants as just over 4 in 10 in each group perceived Hamilton as quite welcoming.

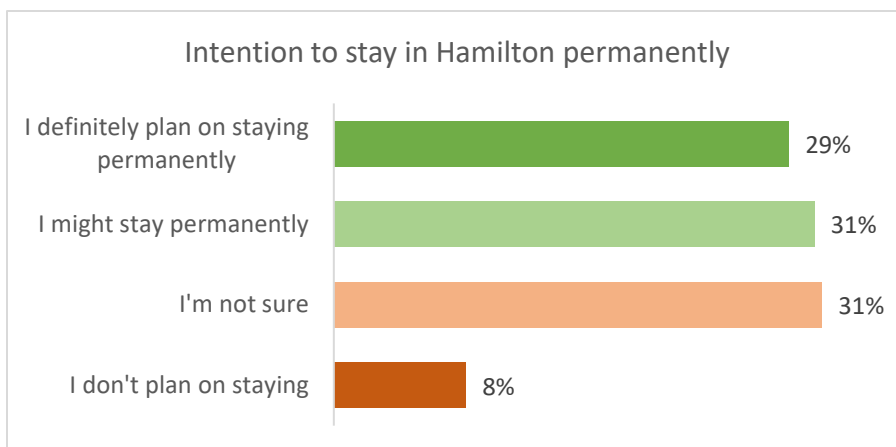
Reasons for choosing Hamilton

When asked about their reasons for coming to Hamilton, nearly half of participants cited the presence of family or friends as the primary factor. The availability and reputation of post-secondary institutions was the second most common reason, especially among international students. One-quarter of participants chose Hamilton because they believed it was more affordable than other communities. About two in 10 participants shared that they did not choose Hamilton, but it was chosen for them (likely as children immigrating with their parents or as government-assisted refugees assigned to Hamilton by the federal government). Other reasons provided were: job opportunities, a robust local economy, proximity to their cultural, faith, or language group and availability of community services and supports.

Why did you choose Hamilton	# of participants	% of participants
I had family or friends that live in Hamilton	134	40%
Post-secondary institutions	126	38%
Hamilton was more affordable than other communities	79	24%
I didn't choose Hamilton - it was chosen for me	62	19%
For a job	41	12%
A healthy local economy	25	8%
Cultural, faith or language groups in this community	24	7%
Community services and supports in this community	15	5%
Other	9	3%

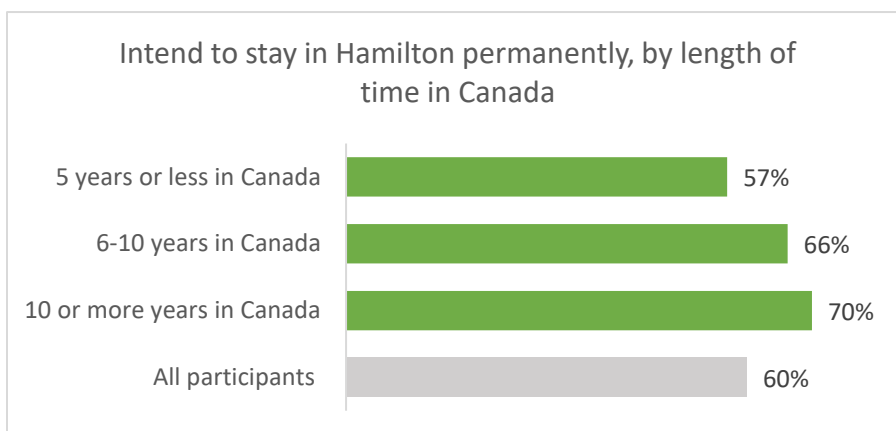
Intention to stay in Hamilton permanently

When asked about their long-term plans in Hamilton, about one-third firmly expressed their intention to stay, one-third said they might stay, and 39% were either uncertain about staying or already had plans to relocate elsewhere.



Intention to stay in Hamilton permanently, by subgroup

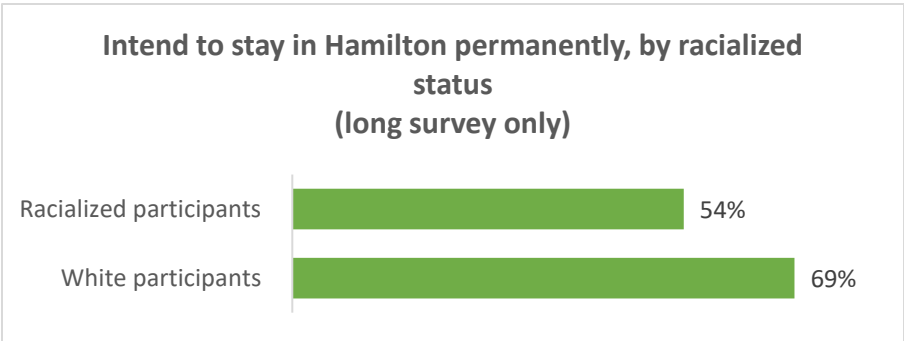
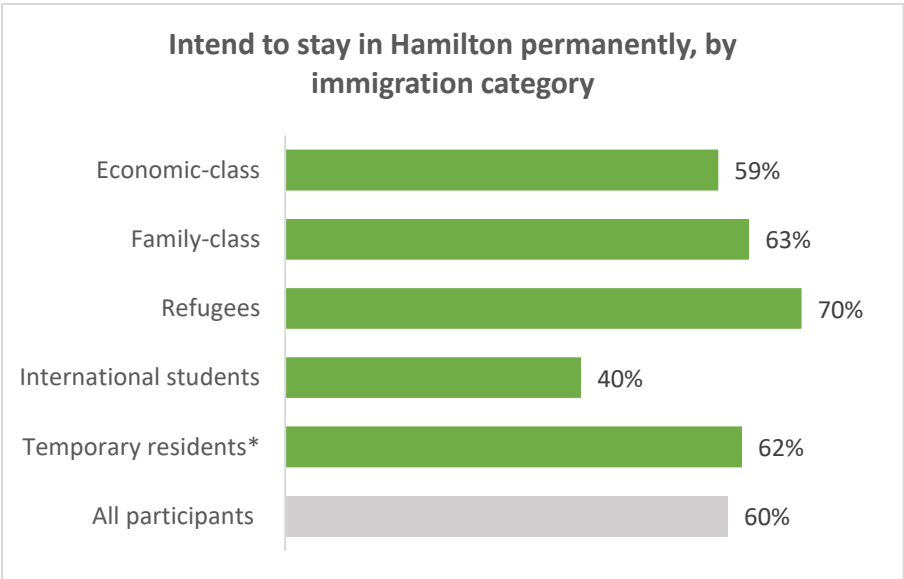
Newcomers were less likely than those who have been in Canada for 6-10 years and those who have been in Canada for more than 10 years to report that they intend to stay in Hamilton.¹¹



¹¹ Refers to those who reported that they “definitely” plan to stay or “might” stay in Hamilton permanently.

When grouped by immigration category, refugees were most likely to report having the intention to stay in Hamilton permanently (70%), followed by family class immigrants (63%), temporary residents (62%) and economic class (59%). International students were least likely to report intention to stay in Hamilton (40%). Additionally, among temporary residents, 65% of Ukrainian temporary residents, 63% of refugee claimants and 57% of temporary workers said they intend to stay in Hamilton permanently.

Comparing results by racialized status showed that white participants were more likely to report intention to stay in Hamilton compared to racialized participants (69% vs. 59%).

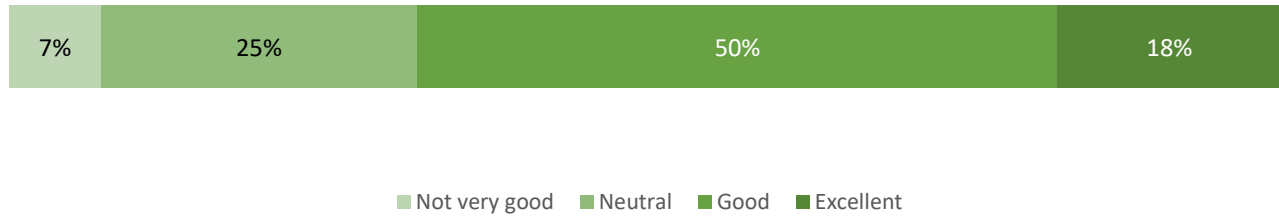


There were no substantial differences between women and men when it came to intention to stay in Hamilton. Women were just marginally more likely to report staying in Hamilton permanently than men.

Settlement experience rating

Participants were asked how they described their experience of settling in Hamilton. Settling was defined as the whole experiencing of moving to, settling and integrating in the city. Overall, most participants seemed to have a positive settlement experience. Over two-thirds of participants described their settlement experience as “excellent” or “good,” a quarter described it as “neutral,” and just 7% were dissatisfied and described their experience as “not very good.”

How do you describe your settlement experience?



When we looked at groups by the length of stay in Canada, long-term immigrants (74%) were most likely to report either an “excellent” or “good” settlement experience. They were followed by newcomers with 69%. However, a smaller proportion of immigrants who had lived in Canada for more than 6 but less than 10 years (58%) reported a positive settlement experience.

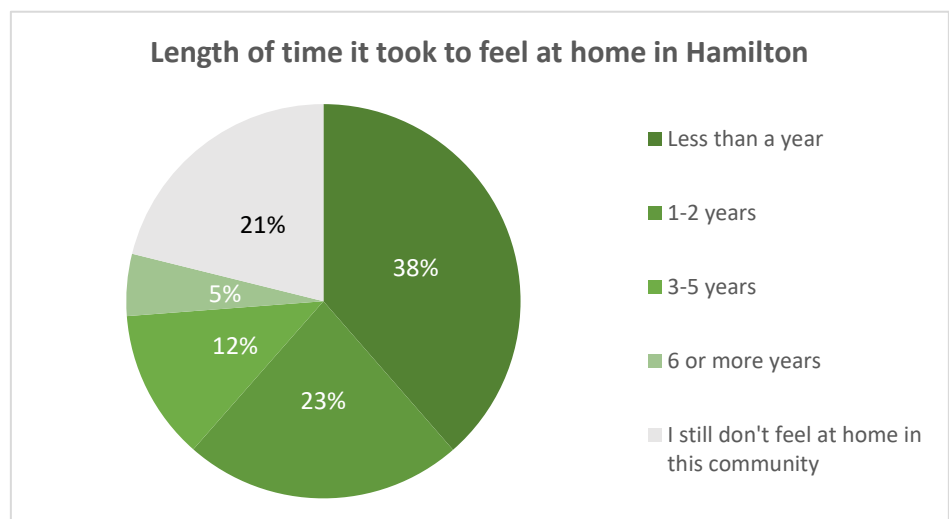
When comparing outcomes across immigrant categories, family class immigrants (74%) were most likely to report a “good” or “excellent” settlement experience. They were followed by economic class immigrants (69%), temporary residents (67%), refugees (66%) and international students (64%).

When examining the data based on gender, men were more likely to describe their settlement experience as “excellent” or “good” compared to women (71% vs. 65%).

There were no differences between racialized and white participants as 67% of each group reported having an “excellent” or “good” settlement experience.

Length of time it took to feel at home

About two-thirds of participants said it took them “less than one year” or “one to two years” to feel at home in Hamilton, highlighting the importance of the initial settlement experience.¹² For 12% of participants, it took 6 or more years to feel at home in Hamilton, and just over 2 in 10 participants indicated that they still did not feel at home in Hamilton.



¹² Caution should be exercised due to the overrepresentation of newcomers in the overall survey sample.

CONTRIBUTING TO COMMUNITY

Participants shared that they contribute to the community in various ways. The most frequently selected contribution among participants was helping neighbours in times of need. Other common contributions were helping with the natural environment (39%), building skills to contribute to community (38%), helping other newcomers (35%), using skills to support local economy (35%), and speaking up for fairness (30%). Volunteering and donating to local charities were other frequently mentioned contributions. Some participants highlighted their contributions through unpaid family care, voting, board memberships, and business ownership.

Contributions to the community	# of participants	% of participants
I help my neighbours when they need it	187	58%
I contribute to improving the natural environment (recycling, picking up garbage, planting trees, etc.)	126	39%
I continue to build my skills and strengthen the ways I can contribute to this community (learning English, further education, building professional skills, etc.)	123	38%
I help newcomers to Canada make their home in our community	113	35%
I contribute with my skills and experience to the local economy through my job	112	35%
I speak up for fairness and treat people with kindness in my community	98	30%
I volunteer with community organizations, groups or faith communities	90	28%
I donate to local charities	83	26%
I provide unpaid help for family members (children, grandparents, etc.)	81	25%
I volunteer with youth sports (coaching, driving youth, etc.)	53	16%
I vote in local/municipal, provincial or national elections in Canada	50	15%
I am on a board of directors or other committee	30	9%
I tutor or help youth learn in this community	29	9%
I am a business owner and my business contributes to our community's economy	13	4%
Other (please specify):	5	2%

Participants were asked to share stories of how they have contributed to their community and a wide range of activities were mentioned, from grassroots activism to charitable contributions. Many focused on local initiatives like coaching sports, cleaning neighborhoods, and providing essential resources to marginalized populations. Others highlighted their roles in broader community initiatives, such as fundraising for hospitals and charities, volunteering for non-profits, or developing educational and cultural programs. Overall, participants emphasized both individual actions and collaborative efforts as ways to contribute to and enrich their community.

Survey Participants on their Community Contributions

"I have worked as a volunteer for different organizations in the city and for more than ten years I have belonged as part of the board of directors and as a volunteer to a nonprofit organization that helps immigrants from the Hispanic community looking to provide as much support to people no matter the age, status, religion or anything. I love to give as much as I can because it's just a little bit of [what] I got when I came as a refugee."

"Every summer I try to raise \$1000 for McMaster sick kids. Every year I try to meet the requirements for 2 to 3 charities that only require physical fitness recorded and analyzed by fitness devices to have brands sponsors and brand companies facilitate sponsoring more funds for those who need it most."

"I and my friends have been volunteering to help homeless since last year at our own cost. We have visited them in downtown every month and provided foods with sharing God's message, which makes us feel so abundant and grateful."

"I always welcome the newcomers by giving them clothes, jackets, shoes or any things that would help them feel comfortable."

"I contribute in various club based activities like garbage cleaning in the city as well as donations to homeless people as and when I can based on my limited income."

"I have donated a fair amount to the donations for the local charities for mental health."

"I interned and volunteered for several initiatives helping vulnerable populations and earned several awards recognizing these efforts. One I am particularly proud of is my involvement with a Hamilton organization for homeless and street-involved individuals as an End-of-Life coordinator. I was able to speak to different people who are more at-risk for diseases and early passing or are unlikely to have equitable access to resources related to end-of-life preparations (e.g., wills, advance care planning)..."

"Through a project called mathstronauts, we have math [classes] to kids - immigrants or not, kids that love math, kids struggling with maths."

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

The survey asked respondents about the top challenges they experienced as well as changes they would like to see happen to improve the settlement, integration and well-being of immigrants in Hamilton. Respondents were also given an opportunity to share more information through written responses.

Top challenges experienced

Participants were asked what the biggest challenges they or their families experienced in the past year in Hamilton. The most common challenges were cost of living (reported by 61% of participants), finding housing that is affordable (reported by half of the participants), and finding work (reported by 46% of participants). Other frequently mentioned challenges were making friends (29%), accessing healthcare (26%), learning English (17%), starting a new business (16%), knowing where and how to do things (14%), and transportation (13%).

Biggest challenges experienced in the past year	# of participants	% of participants
Cost of living or money problems	383	61%
Finding housing that is affordable	312	50%
Finding work	289	46%
Making friends	183	29%
Accessing healthcare	163	26%
Learning English	104	17%
Starting a new business	99	16%
Learning where and how to do things	86	14%
Finding relevant programming in local community centres, arts & culture spaces, libraries, etc.	82	13%
Public transit	82	13%
Discrimination/racism	73	12%
Getting information in a language you understand	70	11%
Receiving public or social services (e.g. settlement services, government services, etc.)	68	11%
Finding childcare	67	11%
Finding mental health care	66	11%
Making sure your children are safe and happy at school and in the community	61	10%
Other (please specify)	13	2%

Survey Participants on their Employment Challenges

"In the beginning when I was fairly new the biggest challenge we faced as a couple was being turned down from jobs due to lack of Canadian work experience which was really disappointing and depressing."

"The impossibility of working in my field, doing what I know to do best, just because I still do not have the Canadian registration and this is really hard to get here."

Top solutions suggested

The survey asked participants to select changes that they think would help immigrants reach their full potential. More housing that is affordable was by far the most frequently reported changes desired, followed by more supports for immigrants to find work, more language learning opportunities, a centralized hub for services, and actions to improve social connections and combat racism.

Changes that would help immigrants reach their full potential	# of participants	% of participants
More housing that is affordable	254	74%
Better programs for immigrants to find work	181	53%
Educate employers on the value and ways of hiring, retaining and promoting immigrants	112	33%
More opportunities to help improve English skills	106	31%
One place to get all settlement, immigration and other services	97	28%
A central place for both employers to find immigrants workers and for workers to find employment	97	28%
Actions to improve the social connections of immigrants	92	27%
Actions to reduce racism and discrimination towards immigrants	79	23%
Actions to increase welcoming and acceptance of immigrants	66	19%
More immigrant programming in local community centres, arts & culture spaces, libraries, etc.	66	19%
English learning opportunities in workplaces	61	18%
Greater voice or involvement in community leadership and planning	58	17%
More effort by community services to better serve immigrants	56	16%
Service agencies working together more	52	15%
Availability of interpretation and translation	48	14%
Computer access and training	35	10%
Equal opportunities and proper evaluation of immigrants' credentials, training and work experience	5	1%

When asked to name the most important thing that community leaders should do to improve the welcoming, integration, and well-being of immigrants in Hamilton, participants placed a strong emphasis on three key areas that echoed the top solutions mentioned in the table above: employment, housing and cost of living. These were mentioned 64, 57 and 16 times respectively, totaling 137 mentions.



Employment received the highest number of mentions (64), highlighting the need for job opportunities that match immigrants' skills and educational background, reduced barriers to employment, and job training programs. The overarching theme was the need for opportunities that enable immigrants to have a stable and sustainable employment in Hamilton.

Housing was another critical concern, with 57 mentions. Advocating for more affordable housing options, lowering rents, and supportive housing programs were among solutions mentioned.

On the topic of cost of living, there were calls for increased government financial aid, better control of living costs, and specific financial support systems for newcomers.

Furthermore, participants emphasized the need for improvements in various areas related to the integration and well-being of immigrants in Hamilton, with a focus on settlement/immigration services, family support, language services, immigration status, and information/resources, totaling 73 mentions. Recommendations included enhancing coordination and accountability among organizations providing services, improving family support mechanisms, and expanding language learning and interpretation services. Participants asked for removing immigration status eligibility barriers to accessing services and benefits and stressed the importance of accessible, centralized, and comprehensive information and resources to assist immigrants in their settlement journeys.

In other responses, participants mentioned the topics of socialization, and the need for social or community-based events 31 times. They expressed a strong desire for regular, culturally diverse events to facilitate a sense of belonging. Many noted the importance of age-specific activities and events focused on particular cultural groups, such as Latin American or Muslim communities. Participants said that such events would not only aid initial settlement but also contribute to long-term community integration. There was also a call for locations like mosques and universities to be used for these activities to reach a broader audience.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion was mentioned 31 times. Key points included the need for deep acceptance of differences, prioritizing equity in decisions, and challenging unwelcome remarks about immigrants. Suggestions also included increasing cultural awareness and representation, as well as combating both overt and passive racism.

Finally, participants highlighted the importance of city infrastructure and services, mentioning them 22 times. Participants said there needs to be more recreation facilities across the city and upgrades to existing ones in neighbourhoods with higher concentration of immigrants. They also said there was a need for more family doctors, affordable childcare spaces, more accessible and flexible options for transportation for children. Finally, participants expressing concerns about homelessness and drug-related issues making certain areas feel unsafe in the city.

CONCLUSION

The Hamilton Immigrant Survey 2023 was the first large-scale survey of its kind locally in the recent past. The broad objective of the survey was to understand the diverse experiences of immigrants across a wide range of topics, as well as their challenges and contributions. Through this survey, participants had an opportunity to voice their experiences, and to make suggestions to improve the lives of immigrants who have recently arrived and who will be coming to our city in the future.

Findings from this survey aim to deepen the knowledge of the immigrant settlement experiences in Hamilton. They could guide policies, practices, or upcoming research endeavours, such as focus groups or community discussions. The data collected through this survey is rich, and we hope that we will be able to explore it further as we receive new questions or requests. For inquiries about the data or ideas on leveraging it for positive community change, please reach out to the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC).

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

This survey is a collaborative effort of multiple Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) led by the Waterloo Region Local Immigration Partnership, which conducted bi-annual immigrant surveys in 2019 and 2021.¹³ The project involves several common methodological approaches, including data collection timing, anonymity, a shared definition of 'immigrant',¹⁴ questionnaire types and question design, ethics review application, and promotional strategies.

Survey Timing and Participants

Following the ethics review approval from Centre for Research Ethics Office¹⁵ (CREO), Hamilton Immigrant Survey (2023) was initially launched on March 31 for two weeks to target international students before their summer break. The survey officially launched on May 26, 2023 at the Hamilton Newcomer Day event. The Hamilton Immigrant Survey (2023) targeted the broader immigrant population living, working or studying in Hamilton. The survey closed on June 30, 2023, with 689 eligible responses, including 336 short and 349 long survey responses.

The survey was promoted via multiple channels, including contacting personal and professional networks, settlement service providers, businesses and by using volunteer survey ambassadors. Five survey ambassadors with lived immigrant experience promoted the survey to their personal networks and at several community events. HIPC staff utilized email outreach to reach a wide range of partner organizations and their clients. Organizations were given printed and virtual flyers to share with their clients and through their own networks. Finally, social media advertisement was utilized as a final method of targeting a broader range of immigrant populations.

Data Collection

Our work was guided by collaboration with Waterloo Region LIP, whose survey questionnaires were built on specific performance measurement indicators, feedback from previous surveys, and emerging needs.¹⁶ HIPC adapted Waterloo's data collection tools to reflect the needs of the needs and demographic profile of the Hamilton population.

The Hamilton Immigrant Survey (2023) had two versions. The short version consisted of 18 questions, and the long version had 40 questions. The short version was translated into eight languages: Arabic, Farsi, Somali, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Ukrainian, and Chinese. These languages were determined based on census 2021

¹³ Waterloo Region Local Immigration Partnership. (2021). *Waterloo Region Immigrant Survey Report Summary*. <https://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/en/business-opportunities/resources/Resources--Publications/2021-Immigrant-Survey-Summary-Report.pdf>

¹⁴ The term immigrant refers to any person born outside of Canada, currently living, working or studying in Canada.

¹⁵ For more information about CREO, visit <http://www.communityresearchethics.com/>

¹⁶ Waterloo Region Local Immigration Partnership. (2021). *Waterloo Region Immigrant Survey Report Summary*. <https://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/en/business-opportunities/resources/Resources--Publications/2021-Immigrant-Survey-Summary-Report.pdf>

data on knowledge of English among speakers of various languages in Hamilton as well as input from local settlement service providers.

In addition, the short survey was available both online and in a paper version. There were 180 surveys completed in languages other than English, including 62 paper surveys.

Survey language	Number of responses
English	509 ¹⁷
Arabic	69
Spanish	42
Ukrainian	27
French	20
Farsi	19
Chinese	2
Somali	1

For further information about the data collection tool or research methods, please contact HIPC directly.

Analysis

The online survey was hosted on Survey Monkey. Following the data collection, the raw data was cleaned, and ineligible responses were removed from the analysis. Responses were excluded if they were completed by persons born in Canada (19), were incomplete (91),¹⁸ or if they were deemed to be bot responses (382).¹⁹

All eligible responses were entered into a spreadsheet and further edited for coherence and clarity.²⁰ Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, with the utilization of an adapted version of Waterloo Region LIP's analysis template on Excel. Qualitative data was sorted and analyzed based on the most notable, reoccurring themes.

The data was disaggregated to explore potential differences and disparities among different groups of survey participants. The selection of groups for disaggregation were based on previous HIPC reports. The main variables selected for disaggregation were: immigration category, length of stay in Canada, racialized status, and gender identity.

In the process of data analysis and disaggregation, we paid attention to the size of the survey samples. For example, responses that were less than five were excluded from the report, and in some cases, two or more response categories were combined into a larger category to avoid identification of respondents. In addition, subgroups that were smaller than 25 were excluded or combined into a subgroup larger than 25.²¹

¹⁷ Includes long and short survey responses.

¹⁸ Responses from participants who did not respond any of the experience or perception questions.

¹⁹ The criteria for removing bot responses was developed in collaboration with other LIPs, and it encompassed probability testing and verification of IP addresses, coherence and logical flow of responses, and timing of responses.

²⁰ The qualitative responses were re-sorted to accurately match provided variables.

²¹ Among the disaggregated category of immigration status, the sample of temporary foreign workers, CUAET (Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel) visa holders and refugee claimants were combined into a new category,

Because the survey sample is not precisely representative of Hamilton's immigrant population, the findings may not be generalizable to this larger population. The findings highlighted in this report represent the most notable observations in disaggregated groups. Typically, differences of over 5% between two or more participant groups were considered noteworthy.

Limitations

A range of promotional techniques were employed to connect with the diverse immigrant population in Hamilton, yet the results only partially represent some groups or sub-groups. The presence of three Spanish-speaking survey ambassadors led to an overrepresentation of Spanish-speaking participants. Due to limited sample sizes for certain subgroups, one should approach the findings with caution. It is important to recognize that specific terms or concepts (such as belonging, isolation, or discrimination) might be understood differently across groups, potentially influencing the results.

named "temporary residents." Similarly, various visible minority groups were grouped into one group named "racialized participants."



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