

Hamilton Immigration
Partnership Council

IMMIGRANT VOICES

Hamilton Immigrant Survey 2023

Summary Report



The full report can be accessed at www.hamiltonimmigration.ca

For questions about the survey or this report, please contact immigration.partnership@hamilton.ca.

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.

OVERVIEW

Immigration has been increasing nationally and locally in the recent past. According to census 2021, immigrants make up the biggest share of Canada's population since Confederation in 1867.

In Hamilton, 26% of the population are immigrants. The city welcomed 20,000 new immigrants between 2016 and 2021, predominantly from South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

About **700** immigrants participated in the survey – the **largest survey** of immigrants in **Hamilton**

With increased immigration, there is a growing need to better understand the experiences of newcomers and immigrants in our community in order to improve their settlement and integration.

This survey of local immigrants and newcomers covered many topics from housing, income, and service use to sense of belonging, experiences of discrimination, and more.

MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- **What** are the diverse experiences of immigrants living in Hamilton, as perceived by immigrants themselves?
- **How** do factors such as length of time in Canada, immigration category, racialized status, gender, and education affect these experiences?
- **How** do immigrants think their needs can be addressed?

The **goal** of the survey is to understand the **needs and experiences of immigrants** in order to better support their settlement.

WHO RESPONDED TO THE SURVEY?

Immigration Category

- 32%** refugees
- 18%** international students
- 17%** family class immigrants
- 14%** economic class immigrants
- 8%** Ukrainian temporary residents
- 6%** temporary foreign workers
- 4%** refugee claimants



Time in Canada

- 74%** newcomers (arrived in the past five years)
- 13%** arrived 6-10 years ago
- 14%** arrived more than 10 years ago

Gender, Sexual Orientation & Age

- 55%** women
- 5%** LGBTQ+ community members
- 75%** between 25 and 54 years of age

Racialized Status

- 20%** identified as Latin American
- 14%** Arab
- 13%** South Asian
- 13%** White
- 12%** Black
- 12%** West Asian

72% had a Bachelor's degree or above, and **67%** were employed full-time or part-time

Top first languages

Spanish
Arabic
English
Persian

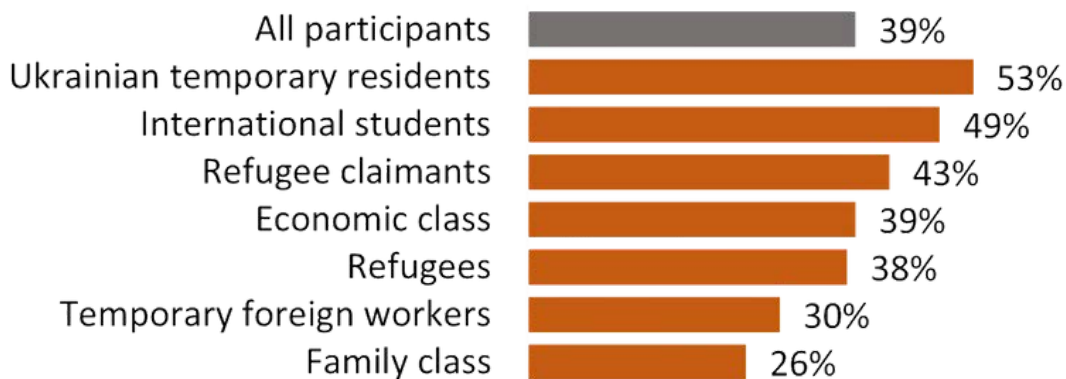
66% spoke English well

Faith

- 33%** identified as Christian
- 27%** as Muslim
- 7%** as Hindu
- 25%** were not a member of faith group

Housing unaffordability, income inadequacy, and underemployment were major issues facing participants. Newcomers (in Canada five years or less), racialized immigrants, and refugees faced the biggest challenges.

% of participants who reported housing is unaffordable, by immigration category



- **4 in 10** participants said their housing was unaffordable, with bigger proportions among newcomers, racialized immigrants, refugees, refugee claimants, international students and Ukrainian temporary residents.



- **Seven in 10** participants said their income was not sufficient for their needs. About **one-third** reported severe income inadequacy.
- Refugees, international students and newcomers were **most likely** to report their income was inadequate.

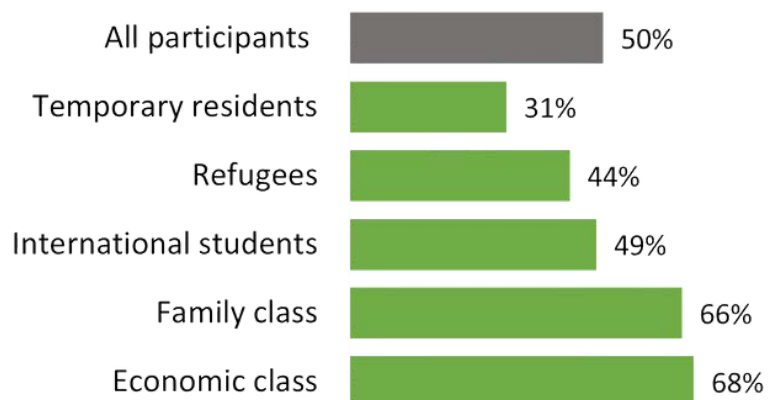
% of participants who reported their income is sufficient/insufficient



- Our income is enough for our needs
- Our income is not quite enough for our needs
- Our income is definitely not enough for our needs

- **Half** of the participants who were working said they were employed in jobs that did not match their skills, education and experience.
- This was **higher** among newcomers, temporary residents, refugees, racialized participants, and women.

% of participants who reported they were employed commensurate with their skills and education, by immigration category



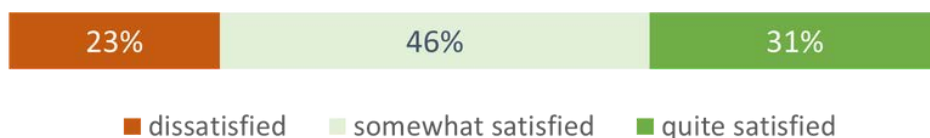
What are the **biggest challenges** you or your family have experienced in the last year in Hamilton?

“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.”

Survey Participant

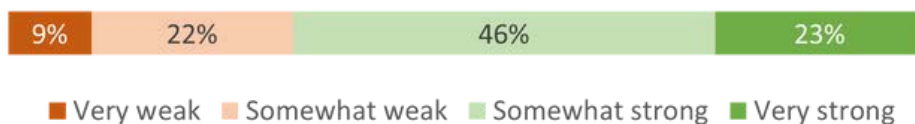
Life satisfaction, sense of belonging, and perceptions of safety were relatively high among participants, but feelings of isolation and experiences of discrimination were also prominent.

Participants' self-rated satisfaction with life



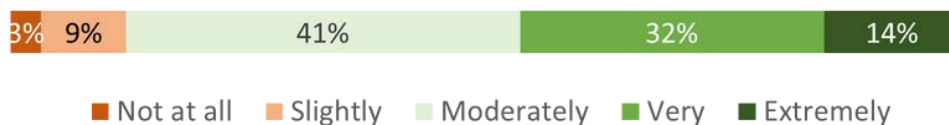
- About **one-third** of participants were very satisfied and nearly half were somewhat satisfied with their lives. Family class immigrants reported the highest life satisfaction among all groups of immigrants.

Participants' self-rated sense of belonging in Hamilton



- Almost **seven in 10** participants reported a strong sense of belonging in Hamilton.

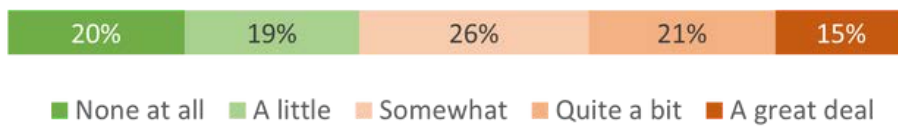
Participants' self-rated feeling of safety in Hamilton



- Nearly **half** of the participants felt very safe in Hamilton. Women and those who have been here more than five years were less likely to report feeling safe.

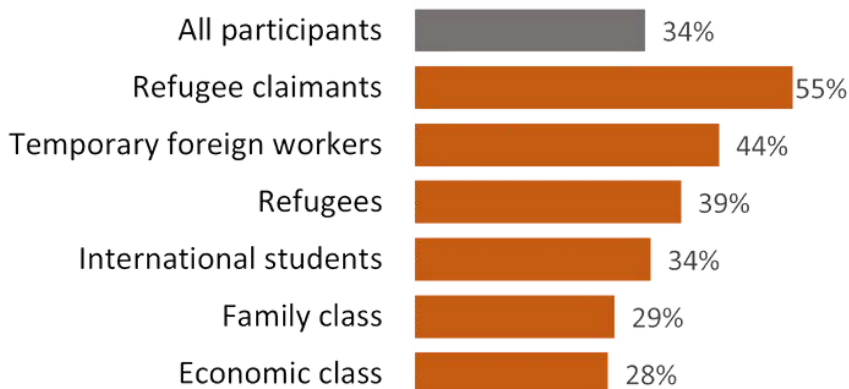


Participants' self-reported feeling of isolation in the past year



- Over **one-third** of participants said they felt very isolated in the past year. This was substantially higher among international students, newcomers and racialized immigrants

% of participants who reported experience of discrimination in the past year, by immigration category



- Over **one-third (34%)** of all participants reported experiencing discrimination in the past year. Refugee claimants, temporary foreign workers, racialized individuals, and refugees were the groups most likely to report such experiences.



Top bases of discrimination reported were:

- Race/skin colour (reported by **51%** of participants)
- Ethnicity or culture (**40%**)
- Accent (**34%**)
- Language ability (**29%**)
- Religion (**29%**)
- Immigration status (**27%**)

Top context where participants experienced discrimination were:

- At job, from supervisors, co-workers or clients (**41%**)
- In a store, bank or restaurant (**34%**)
- When applying for a job or promotion (**33%**)
- When looking for housing (**26%**)
- Using public areas (**21%**)

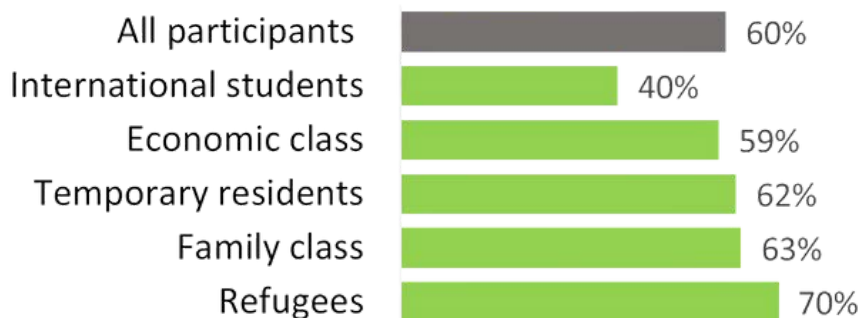
Participants generally viewed Hamilton as a welcoming community and said that they intended to stay here permanently.

How welcoming is Hamilton to immigrants?



- Close to half of participants said Hamilton was a welcoming city to immigrants, but this was lower among long-term immigrants compared to newcomers and lower among women compared to men.

% of participants who intend to stay in Hamilton permanently, by immigration category

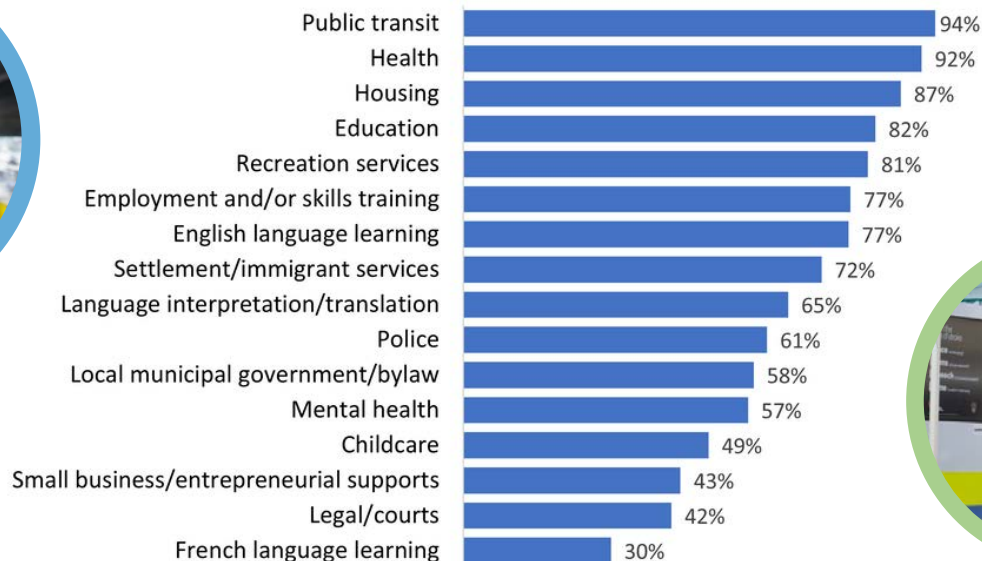


- A majority of participants said they planned to stay in Hamilton permanently. Across various immigrant groups, refugees were most likely to report intending to stay here permanently and international students least likely.
- The most frequently mentioned reasons for choosing Hamilton were having family and friends, attending postsecondary institutions, and affordability compared to other cities.



Participants were highly satisfied with services in the community, and almost all reported using at least one service in the past year.

Types of service used by participants



- The most frequently used services were **public transit, health, education, and recreation** across all groups of immigrants.
- Settlement, language learning, and employment services were used by around three-quarters of participants.

How do you describe your settlement experience?



About seven in 10 participants rated their settlement experience positively.

87% of participants reported that they contributed to the community in some way.

- The most common contributions reported were helping neighbours, doing their part for the environment, and building skills to contribute to the economy.
- Around **one-quarter** of participants said they were volunteering or donating to charities.



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



Survey Participant



When asked for their suggestions to community leaders to improve the lives of immigrants in Hamilton, **participants highlighted the need to address housing affordability and cost of living, and reduce barriers to meaningful employment.**





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