

St. Thomas-Elgin Local Immigration Partnership **Community Plan 2025-2028**

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Guiding Principles

These principles shape how the plan is implemented and how partnerships are built, grounded in a commitment to equity, justice, and belonging. They recognize and celebrate the diverse identities, strengths, and contributions of newcomers and immigrants:

■ Collaboration

Work across public, private, and non-profit sectors, communities, and cultures to co-create solutions rooted in shared responsibility and collective care.

■ Empowerment

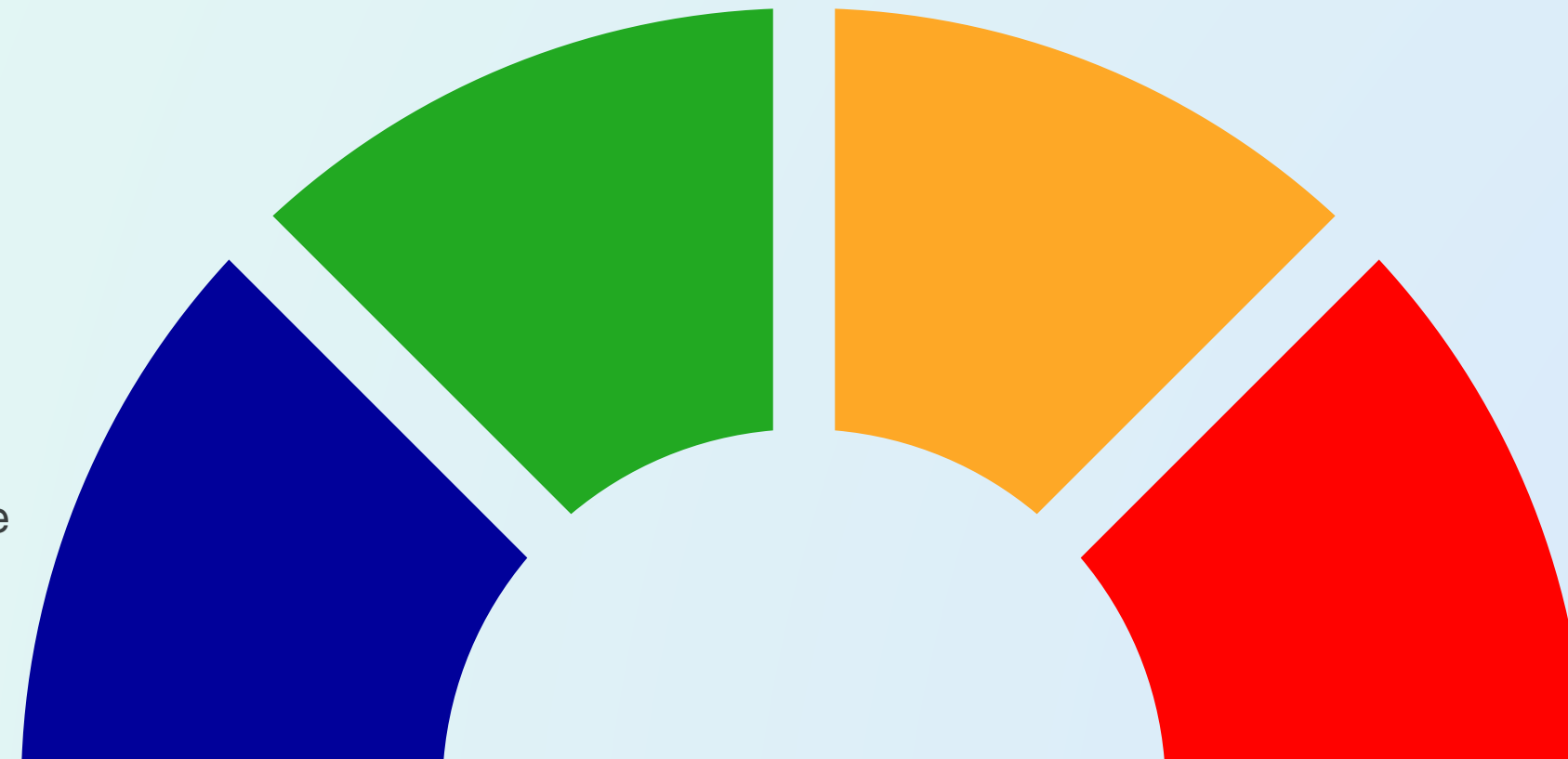
Support and resource newcomers in exercising agency, shaping their own journeys, and contributing meaningfully to community life.

■ Affirmation

Ensure voices of newcomers and immigrants are centred in decision-making and community-building. Create spaces where newcomers do not just adapt - they feel safe and proud to share their culture, lead, teach, and shape the community.

■ Sustainability

Strengthen systems, relationships, and practices that are equitable, resilient, and adaptable to evolving community needs and realities.



Vision

St. Thomas and Elgin County will be a welcoming, caring, and affirming community that uplifts the dignity and contributions of culturally diverse newcomers and immigrants, including those with temporary and permanent immigration statuses. By actively addressing systemic barriers and fostering equity, the community will nurture belonging and grow together to call St. Thomas and Elgin County home.

Goal

Within five years of arrival, 80% of newcomers report feeling supported, connected, and engaged in community life, recognizing that integration timelines vary and progress depends on equitable systems and collaborative community action.



Priorities

Priority:	Build	Connect	Transform
Audience:	Newcomers and immigrants, including permanent and temporary statuses.	Newcomers and immigrants, community members, including service providers, employers, residents, and local leaders.	Systems and institutions, including government, healthcare, education, employers, housing, and community leadership.
Focus:	Short-term to medium-term	Medium-term to long-term	Long-term
Goal:	Support early settlement by ensuring timely, equitable, and culturally affirming access to services and opportunities that enable newcomers to participate fully and thrive in community life.	Foster meaningful connections between newcomers and the broader community by promoting mutual understanding, collaboration, and shared responsibility for building a welcoming, caring, and affirming St. Thomas and Elgin County.	Advance systemic and institutional change by identifying and addressing barriers, promoting equity, and strengthening policies, practices, and partnerships that support sustainable integration and meaningful participation.
Key Strategies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement navigation • Employment & career pathways • Health access & interpretation • Language learning • Housing access • Safety & anti-discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community education & awareness • Social interaction & engagement • Employer engagement • Youth & family support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy advocacy • Systemic access improvements • Employment supports & benefits • Workplace equity • Human rights & anti-racism

Key Impacts

These impacts reflect meaningful progress toward newcomer integration and community transformation:

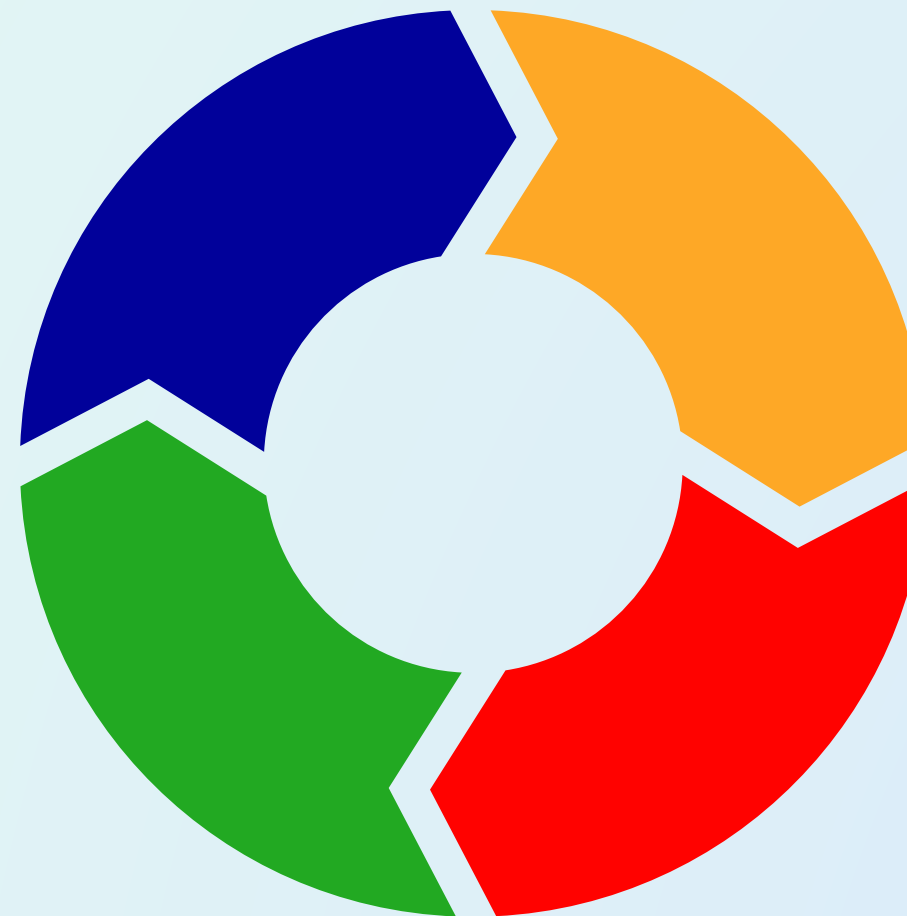
■ Economic & Structural Equity

Employment equity: Newcomers achieve parity with the local workforce, with outcomes reflecting opportunity and recognition of diverse skills.

DEI policies integrated: Municipalities embed diversity, equity, and inclusion in governance, planning, and decision-making.

■ Belonging & Emotional Integration

Sense of belonging: Immigrants report feeling welcomed, safe, and emotionally connected to the community through inclusive and affirming spaces.



■ Knowledge, Confidence & Systems Navigation

Improved service navigation: Immigrants independently access services and participate in civic, cultural, and social life with confidence.

Settlement needs met: Housing, healthcare, and language supports are addressed through equitable systems.

■ Social Connection & Community Engagement

Reduced isolation: Immigrant social connections and community engagement increase, fostering inclusion, and well-being.

Increased public engagement: Community members demonstrate awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity through attitudes and actions.