



EMPLOYMENT SURVEY REPORT 2021-2022



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ERIP Employment Report 2021-2022

Introduction

The Eastman Region Immigration Partnership (ERIP) is one of many Local Immigration Partnerships in communities across Canada, created to help build community-based partnerships for stronger welcoming communities. Under the leadership of the ERIP Coordinator, and Eastman Immigrant Services (EIS), ERIP is governed by a Partnership Council that consists of community stakeholders and an Immigrant Advisory Table (IAT). A five-year strategic plan for ERIP was developed in collaboration with the ERIP Coordinator, ERIP Partnership Council and the IAT. The strategic plan identified three priority areas for the Eastman region: education, employment, and social services.

This project aims to identify successes, challenges and service gaps related to the employment needs of both employers and newcomers to Canada, in the Eastman region.¹ Data for the project was collected from using several methods:

- Employers participated in an online employer survey,
- Employers participated in interviews conducted by the consultant,
- Newcomers provided feedback through a questionnaire delivered via Eastman Immigrant Services.

Throughout the study, the consultant engaged with ERIP, EIS, employers, community stakeholders, and newcomers to encourage feedback and input for the report. This report is the culmination of numerous discussions and data sources and is informed by those community stakeholders who participated in the study. Ultimately, the report represents the interpretations and analyses of the consultant and ERIP.

This report provides an overview of the key findings on data and feedback collected throughout this project. (See appendix for full reports, employer survey and interview questions, and newcomer feedback form)

¹ For the purposes of this study, “newcomers” are defined to include all Permanent Residents, Refugees, Refugee Claimants, Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW), Naturalized Citizens, and International Students that have been in Canada from 1 day to 5 years.

Overview of the Employment Online Survey Report

Respondents equally represented employers within the City of Steinbach and within the Eastman region. Thirty-five employers from 10 different sectors participated in the online survey.

A majority of employers in the Eastman region acknowledge they are currently experiencing difficulty finding staff and project significant staff increases within the next 3 to 5 years.

“We are in great need of employees immediately, full-time and part-time.”

Key findings:

- An overwhelming majority of employers (90%) indicated that newcomers to Canada are important for the economic and community development goals of their communities;
- 70% of respondents indicated they already had newcomer employees, while 90% indicated they would hire a newcomer to Canada in the future;
- 63% of employers indicated they would need assistance with resources and supports such as communication between co-workers, ongoing education/training, hiring and orientation process for newcomers;
- The top 5 barriers/challenges to hiring newcomers were identified as:
 - Language skills
 - Assessing competencies acquired abroad
 - Complexity of the immigration process
 - Adapting skills such as tools or technology to the local context
 - Orientation, training, workplace culture and diversity training

“I believe there are so many valuable employees we are not bringing on to our team due to language barriers.”

Employers also provided additional comments as below:

- *“Managing newcomers’ expectation of career advancement.”*
- *“Certifications received in home country may not transfer here.”*
- *“Size of pool – we need greater numbers.”*
- *“Being far from other services and needs.”*
- *“Having enough experience to meet government criteria.”*
- *“Finding a place for them to live in the community we are located in.”*
- *“Barriers have been most present when social nuances and communication have not been clear. In human services, this is of utmost importance, because of the type of support we provide to vulnerable adults. A complete and thorough grasp of English as well as understanding diplomacy and tact is very important.”*

Overview of Employer Interviews

Respondents equally represented employers within the City of Steinbach and within the Eastman region. Five employers from 5 different sectors participated in telephone interviews.

“The greatest challenge is our ability to find people with the right skills.”

Key findings:

- Employers in the region are experiencing labour market supply shortages,
- Recruitment strategies work but new arrivals travelling to Canada are delayed due to COVID,
- Challenges of hiring newcomers are:
 - Finding people with the right skills,
 - Language barriers, communication for safe work, orientation and training, (masks make it more challenging),
 - Housing and transportation for employees in rural areas.
- Strengths of hiring newcomers are:
 - A diverse workforce, different ways of thinking,
 - Work ethic and strong commitment, good employees.
- Challenge for newcomers:
 - Finding a job, in their area of skill
 - Fear of failure
- Welcoming workplaces include respect, communication to employees, education and awareness,
- Some employers have experienced isolated incidents of discriminatory comments due to vaccination status,

“We welcome opportunities to participate in cultural and diversity training.”

Key Findings from Newcomer Feedback

Twenty-seven newcomers working at 16 different employers participated in the newcomer employment feedback questionnaire. Four of the twenty-seven were unemployed due to immigration status, studying English, and one was a new arrival of less than 3 months. The questionnaire was distributed to Eastman Immigrant Services clients and students. The majority of the participants had lived in Canada from less than 1 year to 10 years.

Overview:

- The majority (85%) of the participants were employed full-time;
- Finding a job was listed as one of the top 3 challenges upon arrival, the other two were finding a place to live, and learning about their new community.
- The top 3 challenges to finding employment:
 - Language skills and abilities
 - Transportation
 - Finding a job in their skill/education
- The majority of respondents indicated their employers did not provide additional supports or resources, other than cultural awareness training;

Newcomers also provided additional comments as below:

- *“Eastman Immigrant Services continues to help to newcomers even if they are not new arrivals.”*
- *“I didn’t know about Eastman Immigrant Services when I arrived, but I do now.”*
- *“Eastman Immigrant Services should have more presence on social media.”*

“Eastman Immigrant Services and family or friends helped me when I arrived.”

Conclusion

The Eastman region has seen an increase in the number of newcomer arrivals drawn by employment opportunities and attracted to the lifestyle of a rural community. This study provided an opportunity for both employers and newcomers to identify employment successes and challenges, and to identify gaps and/or opportunities for the future.

The information collected through this study indicate that employers in the region welcome and value newcomers for their work ethic, strong commitment, and the diversity they bring to the workplace. The majority of employers and community stakeholders recognize that newcomers are important and bring strength not only to individual workplaces, but to the economic development and growth in the Eastman region.

- The employer survey revealed that a majority of respondents currently need employees and also projected their workforce supply need would increase within the next 3 to 5 years. This was verified and supported in the individual employer interviews. Even with recruitment strategies in place to meet their ongoing and future labour market needs, there is still a shortage of workers.
- Employers indicated one of the greatest challenges is to find people with the right skills and abilities for their workplace. Furthermore, most employers lack the resources to assess competencies acquired abroad, or to understand the immigration process. Newcomers also identified that it is a challenge to find employment that fits their skill or education. In addition, it is difficult for newcomers to navigate opportunities to further their education so they can work to their full potential in their area of expertise.
- Language skills and abilities were identified as a challenge in the employer survey, the employer interviews, and was one of the top challenges in the newcomer feedback. Resources that support hiring, orientation and on-going training of newcomers vary with size of employer and in-house resources, a barrier to success for both employers and newcomers. While some larger employers have processes in place for hiring, orientation, and ongoing training of newcomer employees, many smaller employers do not have the same capacity to intentionally focus on the needs of their newcomer employees.
- Access to cultural diversity training was highlighted as important for workplaces by employers and newcomers alike.
- Transportation and housing, an employment challenge for newcomers, was also identified by employers who had locations in rural areas where there were large distances between communities.

As workplaces in the Eastman region become more diverse due to immigration, it is important to address the way employers need to adapt to the changing demographic. The following section outlines some areas of opportunity for employers and communities in the Eastman region.

Opportunities and Next Steps

This section will outline areas of opportunities and potential next steps for addressing labour market, training and education needs in the region.

Employers identified a need for workers and a concern for future labour market supply as their businesses expand and grow.

Employers indicated the greatest challenge is to find employees with the right skills and abilities for their workplace. Reciprocally, newcomers to Canada also identified the same challenge as a barrier to find employment that fits their skill or education.

- This presents an area of opportunity for communities in the region to collaborate with each other and the provincial government Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program (MPNP) to develop an **immigration initiative** specifically for the Eastman region. As an example, the City of Morden has been successful in bringing newcomers to their community through the Morden Community Driven Immigration Initiative (MCDII). Under the MPNP, the Morden Immigration Initiative plays an active role identifying new permanent residents, and working with local employers to identify targeted occupations to satisfy local labour market needs. Recently, the City of Winkler also launched an immigration initiative to address their community and labour market needs.

Newcomers find it difficult to navigate opportunities to further their education so they can work to their full potential in their area of expertise.

- This is an opportunity to address gaps in local newcomer training by conducting an assessment of the education and training needs of both newcomers and employers in the region. In collaboration with ERIP, EIS, employers, and educational institutions in the region are well-positioned to conduct needs assessments to identify gaps, and develop training opportunities. Both newcomers and employers alike would benefit from training that would enhance the utilization of newcomer skills and abilities, delivered at local collages in collaboration with workplaces.

Language skills and abilities were identified as a challenge in the workplace in both the employer survey and the employer interviews, and was the top challenge in the newcomer feedback.

- This is an opportunity for ERIP and EIS to collaborate with employers to assess their language needs to identify training gaps, and to develop of additional language training programs to meet their needs. This is also an opportunity to work with newcomers to identify their workplace language challenges, leading to expansion of language training that meets the workplace needs of newcomers. Increased language training options would be beneficial for both employers and newcomers in several areas such as hiring, orientation, training, and workplace health and

safety. Increased training options would potentially provide resources for all employers within the entire Eastman region.

Access to cultural diversity training was highlighted as important for workplaces by employers and newcomers alike.

- This is an opportunity for ERIP and EIS to partner with organizations that deliver diversity and intercultural training workshops. A majority of employers value this training, but only provide it to managers or supervisors. Extending cultural and diversity training to include employees will further enhance communication in a diverse workplace.

Transportation and housing, an employment challenge for newcomers, was also identified by some employers who had locations in rural areas where there were large distances between communities.

- This is an opportunity for community stakeholders and employers to collaborate to identify community needs, and to discuss transportation and housing strategies. Both transportation and housing are important for the attraction and retention of newcomers to communities in the Eastman region.

ERIP and EIS have an opportunity to actively promote the existing resources and supports they provide for the Eastman region, connecting with community stakeholders and employers to expand on the current programs and services, to develop and create accessible educational opportunities for employers. Funded by the Government of Canada and the Manitoba government, EIS and ERIP are positioned as a link to resources, programs and services for the Eastman region.

Appendix List:

Appendix A – Eastman Employer Survey Report

Appendix B – Employer Online Survey Questionnaire

Appendix C – Key findings from Eastman Employer Survey Report

Appendix D – Newcomer Feedback Report

Appendix E - Newcomer Employment Feedback Form

Appendix F - Employer Interview Report

Appendix G – Employer Interview Questionnaire Template



EASTMAN REGION IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

EMPLOYMENT SURVEY REPORT 2021-2022



OCTOBER 27, 2021

Employer Survey Report

Introduction

Immigration is a key factor of Manitoba's economic growth strategy and continues to contribute to the growth of rural communities in Manitoba. The Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program (MPNP) has been a driving force bringing skilled workers to the province, combined with employer-driven and community initiatives, and the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

With increasing numbers of immigrants selecting rural communities as their new home in Manitoba, more information on the settlement and employment of newcomers² is needed to understand both employer and newcomer needs in rural communities. The needs of each community are unique, based on a combination of the geographic size of the region, employment opportunities, housing, transportation, language and skills abilities of newcomers, and the availability of services and supports for newcomers, employers, as well as the host community. The Eastman region has seen and continues to see population growth due to immigration. This study is intended to provide an overview of employer needs in the Eastman region.

Executive Summary

This report presents findings from an employer online survey distributed to employers in the Eastman region in September 2021. The goal of the survey is to provide an opportunity for employers to share their perspectives on hiring newcomers to Canada. An overwhelming majority (90%) of employers indicated that newcomers to Canada are important for the economic and community development goals of their community or the region as a whole. The focus of the survey is to identify the challenges and successes of hiring newcomer employees, retaining newcomer employees, identifying the resources and supports that employers use for assistance, to determine what resources and supports are still needed. The survey touches on current labour market needs and what future needs will be into the next 3 – 5 years. Respondents were asked to reflect on their experiences and observations at their individual workplaces when answering the survey questions.

The survey was constructed and distributed through SurveyMonkey and the link was sent to employers identified through existing networks and internet searches. Respondents were also encouraged to share the link with their network. In all, 35 responses were gathered over the period of two weeks. Although the survey results provide useful insight into some of the gaps, challenges, and successes that exist, it is important to note that the

² For the purposes of this study, "newcomers" are defined to include all Permanent Residents, Refugees, Refugee Claimants, Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW), Naturalized Citizens, and International Students that have been in Canada from 1 day to 5 years.

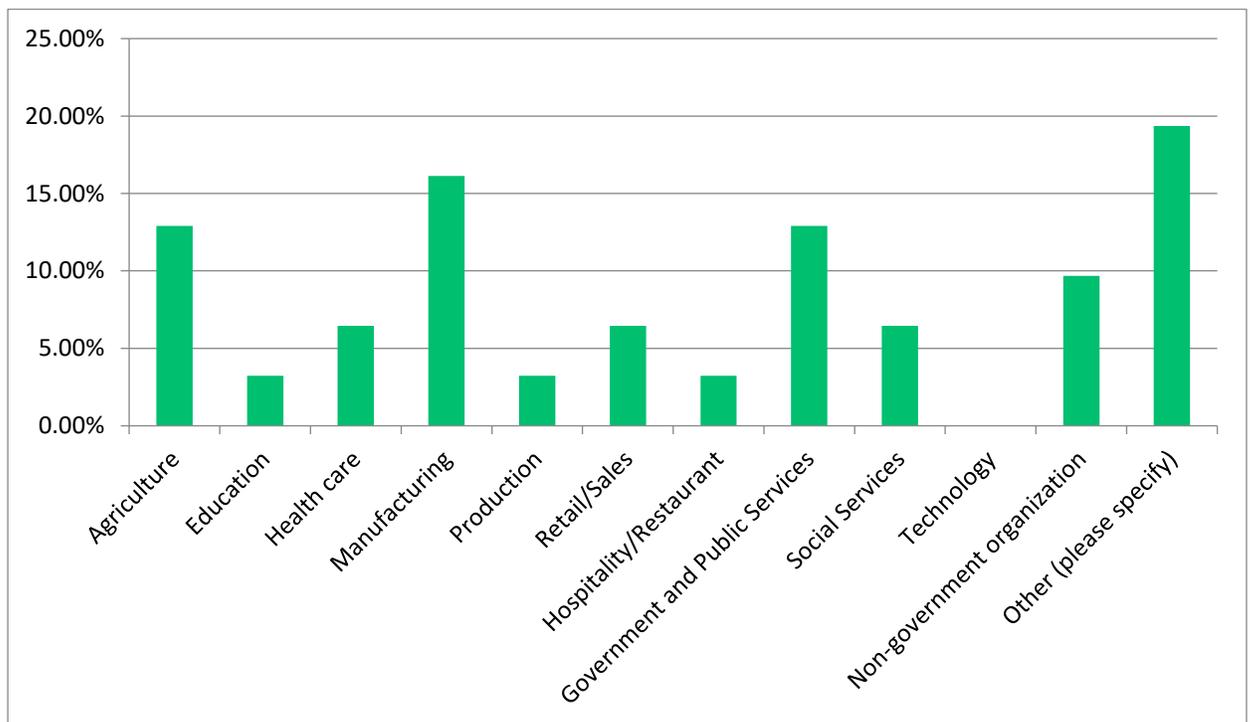
survey responses represent the perspectives of a small group of employers and are by no means comprehensive in scope.

The objective of presenting these findings is to provide an overview of the responses to key questions in the survey.

Overview of employer online survey responses

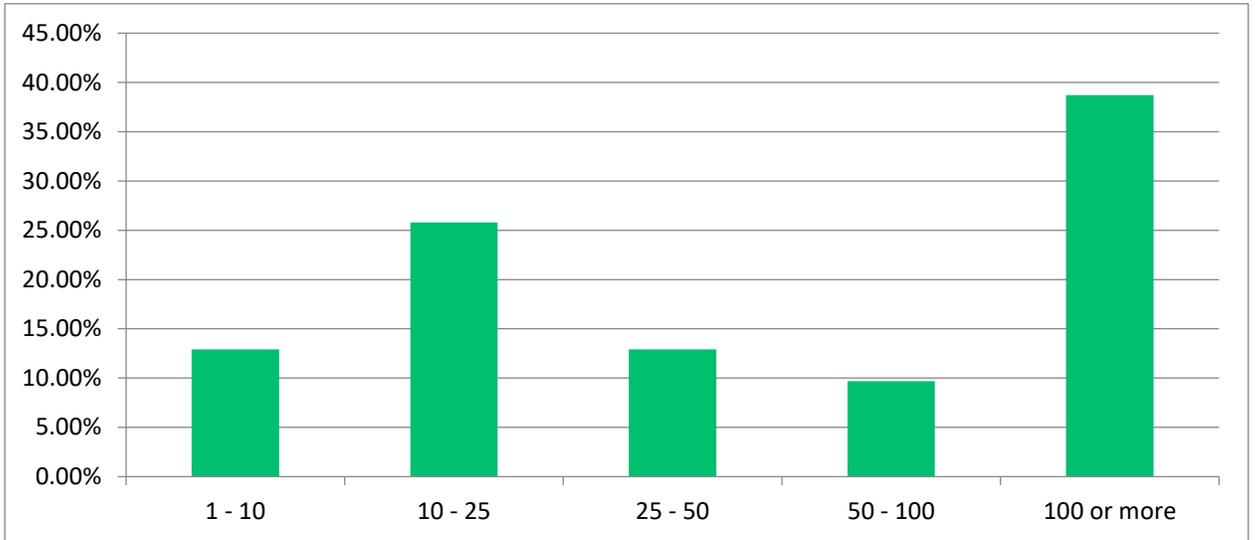
The survey respondents represented a diverse group of employers from 10 different sectors as indicated below, with the highest representation from manufacturing, agriculture, and government/public services. In the “other” category, the sectors represented financial services, banking, and social services. (see Figure 1 below)

Figure 1: Please indicate the sector that best describes your business or organization



The survey respondents also represented a cross-section of employers based on the number of employees. Twelve percent of the respondents represented workplaces with 1 to 10 employees, 26% with 10 and 25 employees, 13% of the respondents had 25-50 employees, 10% with 50 and 100 employees, and 39% respondents represented workplaces with 100 or more employees. (see Figure 2 on the next page)

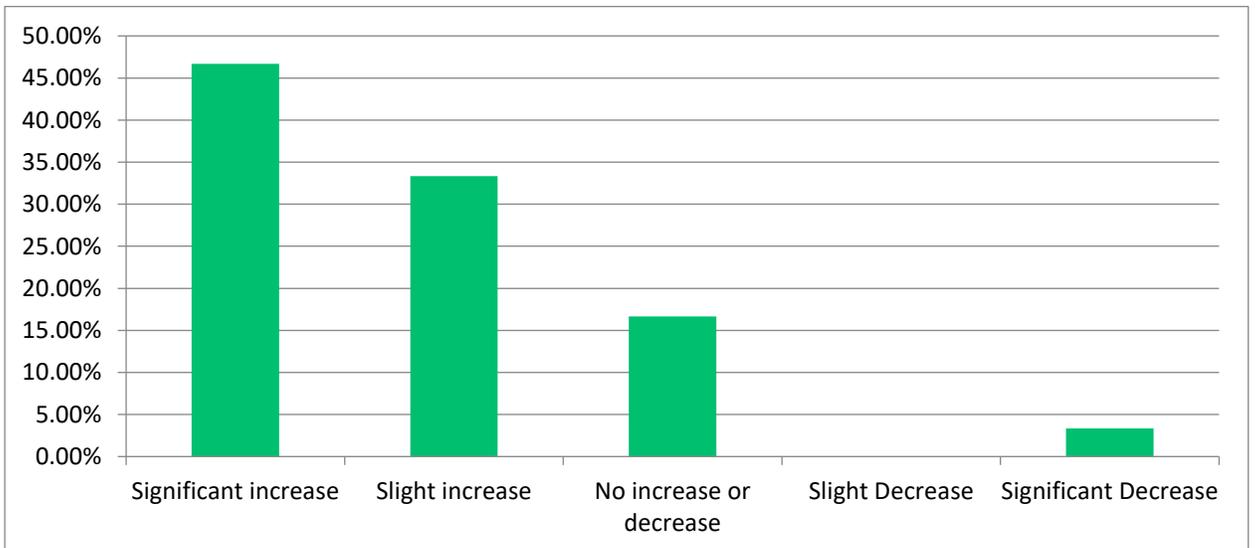
Figure 2: Number of employees at your company



Forty-five (45%) percent of respondents represented employers located within Steinbach, 48% represented employers from communities in the region outside Steinbach. The remaining (7%) represented employers with numerous locations both within and outside of Steinbach.

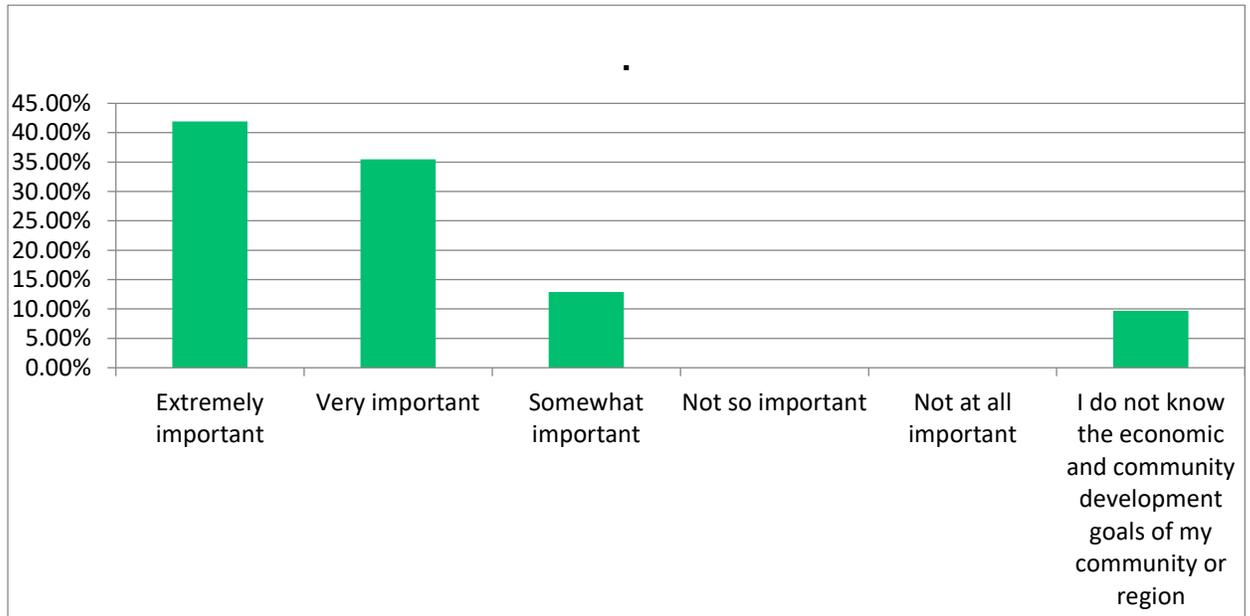
One of the key questions in the survey was to gauge labour market supply needs in the next three to five years. A majority of employers indicated they would be experiencing slight or significant staff increases within the next three to five years. (See Figure 3 below)

Figure 3: What will your workplace requirements be in the next 3 – 5 years?



A majority of respondents (90%) indicated that newcomers are important for the economic and community development goals of their community or the region. The responses varied with 42% indicating extremely important, 35% very important, and 13% somewhat important. (See Figure 4 below)

Figure 4: To what extent are newcomers important for the economic and community goals of your community or region?



A strong majority of respondents (97%) agreed with the following statement:

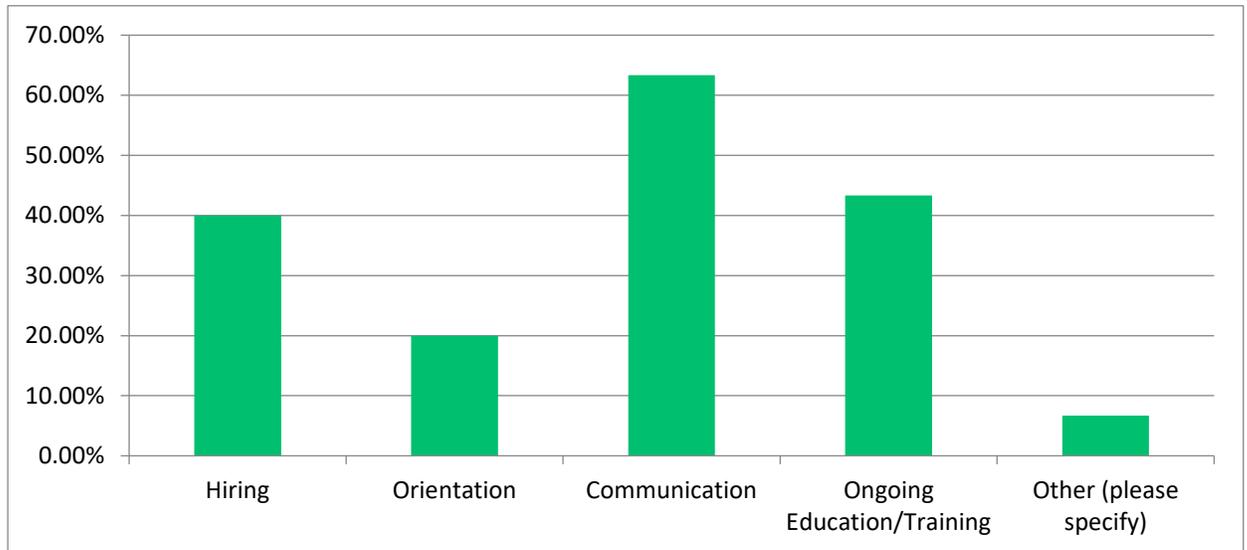
“Our workplace has a positive attitude toward immigrants, cultural diversity, and the presence of newcomers”.

Most respondents indicated that they were experiencing challenges finding employees. However, 67% of the respondents indicated once hired, they have few challenges with employee retention.

Nearly 70% of respondents indicated they already had employees who were newcomers to Canada (who had arrived within the last 5 years). A majority of respondents (90%) indicated they would hire a newcomer to Canada in the future.

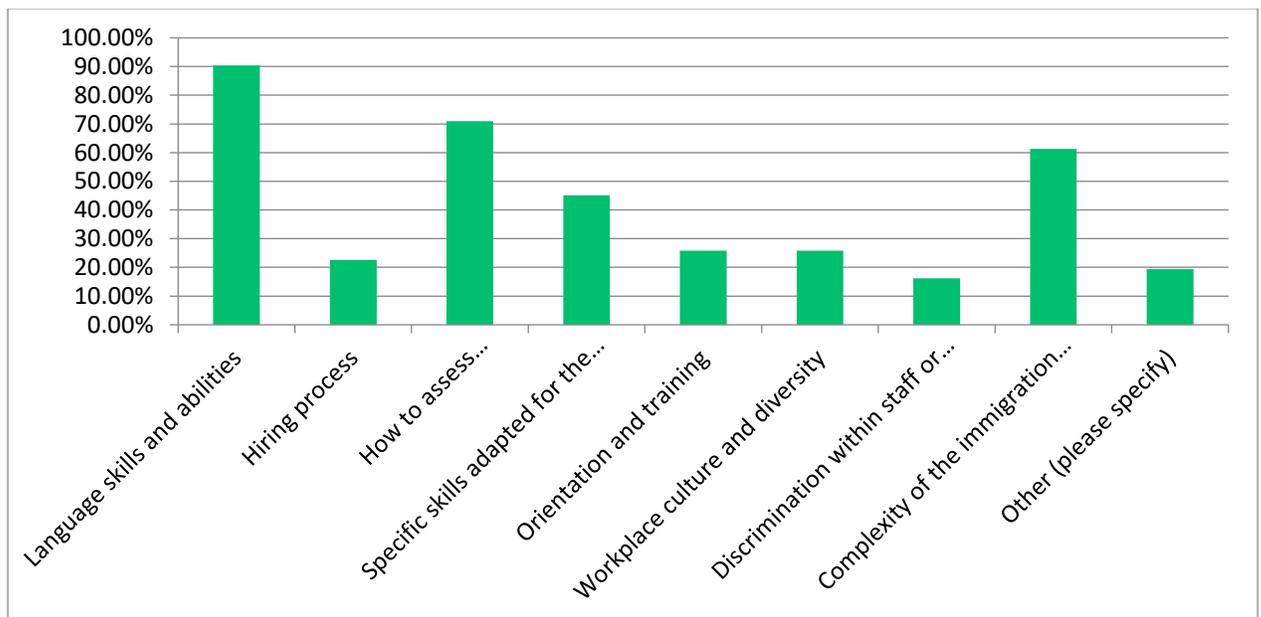
Respondents were asked to identify the key elements they would need assistance with when hiring a newcomer to Canada, and given an opportunity to add other comments. The majority of respondents (63%) indicated the top priorities would be communication with new employees, (between co-workers, and between employees and supervisors), followed by ongoing education/training (43%), hiring of new employees (40%), and 20% identified orientation for new employees. Additionally, other supports needed were identified as language training, and the continued ERIP ongoing third party support. (See Figure 6)

Figure 6: If you were interested in hiring a newcomer to Canada, what would you need assistance with?



Respondents were asked to identify the top five barriers to hiring newcomers. The majority (just over 90%) of respondents identified language skills and abilities, and nearly 71% identified challenges with assessing skills or competencies acquired abroad. Two-thirds of respondents indicated the complexity of the immigration process to be a barrier, and 45% of respondents agreed adapting specific skills such as tools and technology to the local context was a barrier. Orientation and training, and workplace culture and diversity were equally represented at 26%. (see Figure 7 below)

Figure 7: What are the top five barriers to hiring newcomers to Canada?

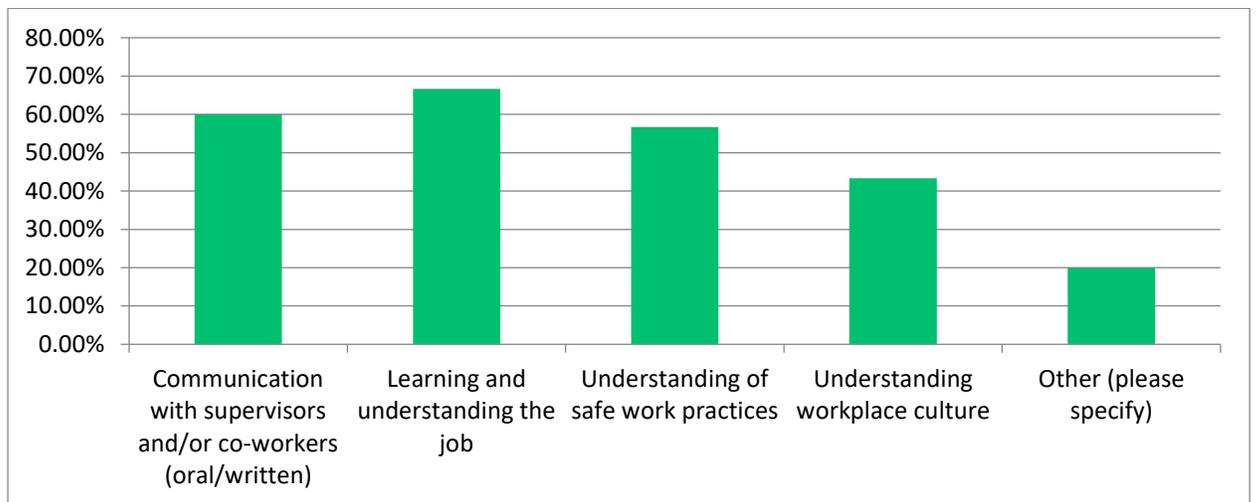


Additional observations by respondents include the following:

- *Managing newcomers' expectation of career advancement*
- *Certifications received in home country may not transfer here*
- *Size of pool – we need greater numbers*
- *Being far from other services and needs*
- *Having enough experience to meet government criteria*
- *Finding a place for them to live in the community we are located in*

With regard to language skills and abilities, a majority of respondents agreed that language skills are needed to learn and understand the job, to communicate with co-workers and supervisors, and to understand safe work practices. Just under half of respondents indicated that language skills were required to understand workplace culture. Additionally, two respondents indicated that language skills and abilities were not applicable to their workplace, and two respondents indicated that communication with customers was important, particularly when customers have impaired hearing. (see Figure 8 below)

Figure 8: Do low English language skills and abilities affect immigrant employees to perform their jobs with regard to the following?

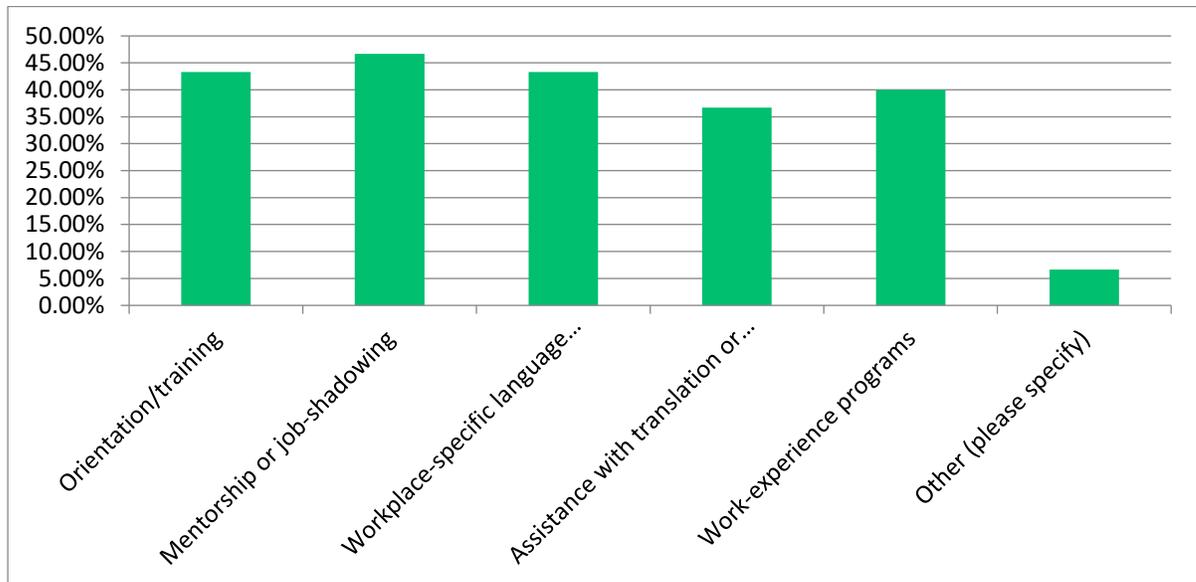


A majority of the respondents (69%) refer employees to English language training programs in the Eastman region. Several respondents (8 employers) indicated their workplace provides on-site workplace language training. Two respondents provide orientation/training for new employees in their first language. Other comments indicated English language skills did not factor into successful employment in instances where there were a large group of employees speaking a common language other than English at a workplace.

Respondents indicated that supports or resources for hiring newcomers to Canada such as mentorship or job-shadowing programs, on-site workplace specific language training,

orientation/training and assistance with interpretation or translation, and work experience programs would benefit their workplace. (see Figure 9 below)

Figure 9: As an employer, with regard to hiring newcomers to Canada, which of the following would be helpful for your workplace needs?



Just under half (45%) of respondents indicated they were aware of existing supports and resources for employers of newcomers in the Eastman region.

However, a majority (55%) of respondents indicated they would like more information about available supports and resources in the Eastman region.

Observations and comments provided by the respondents at the end of the survey include the following:

- *“I believe there are so many valuable employees we are not bringing on to our team due to language barriers.”*
- *“Barriers have been most present when social nuances and communication have not been clear. In human services, this is of utmost importance, because of the type of support we provide to vulnerable adults. A complete and thorough grasp of English as well as understanding diplomacy and tact is very important.”*
- *“We are in great need of employees immediately, full-time and part-time.”*

Conclusion

In recent years, communities and rural municipalities in Manitoba have seen an increase in the number of newcomer arrivals drawn by employment opportunities and attracted to the lifestyle of a rural community.

The goal of the Eastman region employer survey was to provide an opportunity for employers to share their perspectives on hiring newcomers to Canada. It is important to note that the Eastman region employer survey participants represented a diverse group of employers from various sectors, size of business (number of employees), and physical location in the region. This representation provided a snapshot into employer needs, challenges and successes, and areas for improvement.

As a whole, the respondents identified a positive attitude toward immigrants and cultural diversity within their workplace. One of the challenges identified was English language skills that impacted communication for hiring, orientation, and ongoing education/training. This challenge varied with size of employer and in-house resources. English language skills were highlighted as important to learn and understand the job, to communicate with co-workers and supervisors, and to be safe at work. While some larger employers have processes in place for hiring and ongoing training of newcomer employees, one of the areas for improvement is the need to raise awareness of existing and available resources and supports in the region. While many respondents were aware of language training in the region, there are opportunities for improvement to raise awareness about language training, accessibility for all newcomers in the Eastman region, as well as expand options for on-site workplace-specific language training.

An underlying common thread expressed by a majority of respondents was that newcomers to Canada are important for the economic and community development goals of their community or the region as a whole. At the time of the survey, a majority of the respondents were experiencing challenges finding employees. Looking ahead to the next 3 – 5 years, a majority of respondents indicated they will experience slight or significant staff increases.

Based on the information gathered through the employer survey, the need for labour market supply will continue into the next 5 years. This is an opportunity for ERIP to engage with employers, local Chambers of Commerce, Community and Economic Development offices, municipal, provincial and federal governments to continue to explore options to address the labour market supply challenge.

Appendix B

Eastman Regional Immigration Partnership employer survey

The Eastman Regional Immigration Partnership (ERIP) is one of many Local Immigration Partnerships working in communities across Canada to support the two-way street of newcomer settlement and integration, where both newcomers and the host community experience change and varying levels of adaptation. ERIP was created to build a community-based partnership to create stronger welcoming communities, and is governed by a partnership council under the leadership of the ERIP Coordinator. Through the work of the ERIP Coordinator and partnership council, three priority areas have been identified (education, employment, social services) for the Eastman region.

As the population in Manitoba is aging and birthrates are declining, many communities and employers are looking toward immigration as a strategy to fill current and future labour market needs.

As an employer and key stakeholder in the business community, you are invited to participate in a survey that focuses on employer needs, as well as identifying service gaps related to the needs of the immigrant population (ie. Language or other skills training). For the purposes of this survey the term newcomer immigrant includes refugees and seasonal workers.

The data collected through this survey will provide valuable content on the current situation to effectively maximize resources, and will inform future program and support/resource development needs as communities in the region grow.

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions.

1. Where is your business or organization located?
 - a. Steinbach
 - b. Niverville
 - c. Mitchell
 - d. Grunthal
 - e. RM Hanover
 - f. La Broquerie
 - g. Piney
 - h.

2. Please indicate the sector that best describes your business or organization. (select all that apply).
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Education
 - c. Health
 - d. Hospitality/Customer Service
 - e. Production
 - f. Retail/Sales
 - g. Restaurant

- h. Manufacturing
- i. Government and public services
- j. Social Services
- k. Technology
- l. Utilities
- m. Non-government organizations
- n. Other _____

3. Number of Employees.

- a. 1-10
- b. 10-25
- c. 25-50
- d. 50 – 100
- e. 100 or more

4. Will there be changes in your workforce in the next 3 – 5 years? Yes or No

5. What will your workforce requirements be in the next 3 – 5 years?

- a. Significant Increase
- b. Slight Increase
- c. No increase or decrease
- d. Slight Decrease
- e. Significant Decrease

6. Please indicate your response to the following statement by the degree of importance:

To what extent are newcomers important for the economic and community development goals of your community or region. (Very important, somewhat important, neither important nor unimportant, somewhat unimportant, unimportant, I do not know the economic and community development goals of my community or region)

7. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Our workplace has a positive attitude toward immigrants, cultural diversity, and the presence of newcomers.

8. Do you have challenges finding employees?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

9. Do you have challenges retaining employees?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

10. Do you have employees who are newcomers (5 years or less) to Canada?

- 1. Yes

2. No

11. Have you considered hiring a newcomer to Canada?

1. Yes
2. No

12. If you were interesting in hiring a newcomer to Canada, what would you need assistance with? (please select all that apply)

1. Hiring
2. Orientation
3. Communication
4. Ongoing Education/Training
5. Other – add comments in comment box

13. What are the top 5 barriers to bringing newcomers on staff?

- a. Language skills and abilities
- b. Hiring process
- c. How to assess skills/competencies acquired abroad
- d. Specific skills adapted for the local context (tools, technologies)
- e. Orientation and training
- f. Workplace culture and diversity
- g. Cultural dimensions sometimes difficult to combine
- h. Discrimination with the staff/ customers
- i. Complexity of the immigration process
- j. Other – add comments in comment box

14. Do low language skills and abilities affect your immigrant employees to perform their jobs with regard to the following? (select all that apply)

- a. Communication with supervisors and/or co-workers (oral/written) - yes or no
- b. Learning and understanding the job - yes or no
- c. Understanding of safe work practices - yes or no
- d. Understanding workplace culture - yes or no
- e. Other – add comments in comment box

15. What resources and/or training supports for newcomer immigrant employees are provided at your workplace?

- a. Orientation/training in first language of immigrant employee – yes or no
- b. Onsite work-specific language training - yes or no
- c. If you were aware of free English language programs for newcomers, would you refer your employees to them? - yes or no
- d. Other – add comments in comment box

16. As an employer, with regard to hiring newcomer immigrants, which of the following would be helpful for your workplace needs? Please select all that apply.
- Orientation/training - yes or no
 - Mentorship or job shadowing – yes or no
 - On-site workplace specific language training – yes or no
 - Assistance with translation or interpretation – yes or no
 - Other – please add comments
17. Are you aware of existing supports and resources for employers of newcomer immigrants? – yes or no
18. Would you like more information about available supports and resources? - yes or no
19. Do you have further observations or comments? Add comments in comment box
20. In order to finalize the study, please indicate your contact information and the best time of day and week for the researchers to contact you for further clarification or information regarding the survey.
Contact information will not be shared with anyone outside of the research team.

Employment

Key findings from the employment survey

 **35**
Companies

 **10**
Different sectors

 **39%**
More than 100 employees

- 90% of employers indicated that newcomers to Canada are important for economic and community development goals of their communities;
- 70% of respondents indicated they already had newcomer employees. 90% indicated they would hire a newcomer to Canada in the future;
- 63% indicated they would need assistance with communication between coworkers, followed by ongoing education/training (43%), hiring new employees (40%), and (20%) orientation for new employees.
- Top 5 barriers to hiring newcomers: language skills (90%), assessing competencies acquired abroad (71%), complexity of the immigration process (65%), and adapting skills such as tools or technology to the local context (45%).

Newcomer Feedback Report

Summary

This report presents findings from a newcomer feedback questionnaire distributed to newcomers in the Eastman region in November 2021. The goal is to provide an opportunity for newcomers to Canada to share their perspectives on employment in Canada.

The feedback form was constructed in consultation with Eastman Region Immigration Partnership and Eastman Immigrant Services. The questionnaire was distributed through Eastman Immigrant Services settlement office, and available via email or at the Eastman Immigrant Services office in Steinbach. Newcomers were also encouraged to share the link with their network. In all, 27 responses were gathered over the period of three weeks. Although the results of the questionnaire provide useful insight into some of the gaps, challenges, and successes that exist, it is important to note that the responses represent the perspectives of a small group of newcomers and are by no means comprehensive in scope.

The objective of presenting these findings is to provide an overview of the responses to key questions in the survey.

Overview of newcomer questionnaire responses

The newcomer responses represent 27 newcomers from 12 countries, with a median age of 39 years of age. A majority of the newcomers (77%) had post-secondary education in their first country, including 2 Doctors of Veterinary Medicine and 2 with Master's Degrees. The respondents were employed at 16 different workplaces representing agriculture, health care, retail, hospitality and education.

In response to the first question regarding employment, thirty-one percent of the employers were located outside of the City of Steinbach. Of the 27 responses, 23 were employed (85%), 19 of them full-time, 4 part-time. The remaining 4 were unemployed due to transportation, child care, and language training.

Questionnaire participants were asked to share their biggest employment challenges. The responses indicated the biggest employment challenges were language skills/abilities, transportation, and finding a job within skill and education, followed by child care and credentials not recognized in Canada.

Fifty percent of the newcomer responses indicated that their employers did not provide additional supports or resources for newcomers, such as orientation in their language, language classes at their workplace, training information in their language, or cultural awareness training at the workplace. Twenty-seven percent of the responses indicated that their employer provided culture awareness training at the workshop, with the remaining percentage indicating a limited level of additional supports for newcomer employees such as orientation and training in their language. One respondent indicated they had language classes at their workplace.

When asked what they needed help with when they arrived in their new community, the top three responses were: learning about the community, finding a job, finding a place live. The majority of newcomers said they were assisted by family, friends and EIS. Three newcomers indicated that their employer helped them.

A majority of newcomers (89%) accessed EIS at some point and were referred by family or friends, or through internet search.

Nearly all of the respondents indicated that EIS provided the programs and services they needed, with the exception of one person who would like to see more workplace language training.

Newcomers also provided additional comments as below:

- *“Eastman Immigrant Services continues to help to newcomers even if they are not new arrivals.”*
- *“I didn’t know about Eastman Immigrant Services when I arrived, but I do now.”*
- *“Eastman Immigrant Services should have more presence on social media.”*

“Eastman Immigrant Services and family or friends helped me when I arrived.”

Conclusion

In recent years, communities and rural municipalities in Manitoba have seen an increase in the number of newcomer arrivals drawn by employment opportunities and attracted to the lifestyle of a rural community.

The purpose of the newcomer employment questionnaire was to provide an opportunity for newcomers to identify their employment challenges and successes, to assist with identifying gaps or areas of improvement. The newcomers represented a diverse group from various countries, with numerous skills, abilities, and education.

The top three challenges identified through the newcomer employment feedback was English language skills and abilities, finding a job in their skill, abilities, or education, and transportation. These were followed by child care and credentials recognition.

The information gathered through the newcomer feedback provides insight into the newcomer perspective and is a valuable component for the employment study and for workplaces in the Eastman region.



Newcomer Employment

All responses will be confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside of the research team.

Your name will be entered into a draw for grocery gift cards of either \$20.00 or \$50.00.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Mother Tongue: _____

Age: _____ Length of time in Canada: _____

Immigration status upon arrival Canada: _____

Name of Community where you live in Canada: _____

Employment in first country _____

Education/training _____

Question 1: Are you employed? Yes No

If employed, check one: full-time part-time

If employed, where are you employed?

If not employed, why not? (Please select all that apply)

Transportation

Child care

In language classes

Other: _____

Question 2: What have been your biggest employment challenges? (Please select all that apply)

Finding a job in your skill or education

Language skills and abilities

Transportation

Child care

Credentials not recognized

Other: _____

Question 3: If you are employed, does your employer provide the following?

Orientation in your language

Language classes at your workplace

Training information in your language

Cultural awareness training at the workplace

None of the above

Other: _____

Question 4: When you arrived in your new community did you need help to:

- Find a place to live
- Learn about your new community
- Find a job
- Access further education/training

If yes to the above, who helped you?

- Eastman Immigrant Services
- Friends or family
- Employer
- Language teacher
- I helped myself

Question 5: Did you access Eastman Immigrant Settlement Services? yes No

If yes, how did you find out about Eastman Immigrant Services?

Question 6: Did Eastman Immigrant Services provide the programs/services you needed?

Yes No

If not, what programs/services did you need?

Question 7: If you would like to add comments, please do so in the space provided below:

Thank you for completing this questionnaire!

To enter the grocery card draw, please enter your contact information below:

Phone number _____ Email address: _____

Please return questionnaire to Eastman Immigrant Services

284 Reimer Ave, Steinbach, Phone: 204 346 6609

Employer Interview Report

Summary

This report presents an overview of interviews with employers in the Eastman region. The purpose of the interviews was to provide an opportunity for employers to present their perspective on the challenges and successes of hiring and retaining newcomer employees, to identify gaps and share best practices.

The interview questions were developed in consultation with Eastman Region Immigration Partnership (ERIP) and Eastman Immigrant Services (EIS). Due to COVID-19, the interviews with 5 employers were conducted by telephone during the months of October and November 2021. While the number of employers willing to participate was not as high as desired, the employers interviewed provide insight into the gaps, challenges, and successes. It is important to note that the responses represent the perspectives of a small group of employers and are by no means comprehensive in scope.

The objective of presenting these findings is to provide an overview of the responses.

Overview of employer interview responses

Five employers participated in the interviews, and represented 4 different sectors, including manufacturing, agriculture, education, and municipal government.

In response to questions regarding finding and retaining employees in the region, a majority indicated that currently there is a labour market supply shortage in the region, employers never have enough people and need workers immediately. Employers in the region cite struggles to get farm or barn employees, due to distance and transportation. Other challenges identified were finding people with the right skills needed for the available jobs, and shortage of people who were willing to be trained. Depending on the capacity of the employer, this is not always an issue due to recruitment strategies they use. Employers have overcome some of these challenges with successful recruitment strategies that include a recruitment program with people from Philippines. Others have active recruiting teams across Canada, and the use of temporary foreign workers addresses hard to fill jobs. COVID has presented challenges for the recruitment programs, as the flow of newcomers have been affected due to travel restrictions.

Employers indicated that the strength of diversity that newcomers bring to the workplace is invaluable, in terms of the addition of new and different ways of thinking and working. The employers have very positive experiences with newcomer employees who bring a strong work ethic, dedication, and positive attitude that extends into the community.

Employers also indicate that women are employed at their workplaces in various positions from floor personal to leaders in administration. (One employer has 46% female employees on the production floor). As a whole, employers indicated there is no difference between retention of newcomer and Canadian-born employees. Challenges such as housing and transportation exist in the region, (especially in the South East area). To address the need, one employer arranges transportation and there are new housing development projects in the rural municipalities that provide rental options.

Employers were asked for their input on the difficulties newcomers have in finding and keeping jobs. Most employers felt that low language skills and abilities were not the biggest challenge due to the language requirements to immigrate to Canada. The employers indicated that they focused on more intentional orientation, training, and/or mentorship processes to ensure the success of newcomers. As a whole, it was felt that this training and support provided the opportunity for success at the workplace. While housing and transportation were identified as challenges, they were highlighted as not just specific for newcomers, but as a general challenge that is part of making a move to a new community. Child care was cited also as being an issue, but was dependent on the family dynamic.

Employers identified that a big challenge for some newcomers was *fear of failure*, where newcomers get in their own way on their pathway to success in relationship to their life and work in Canada.

“As the demographic changes in our growing communities, there is an increased awareness of discrimination and anti-racism sentiments. Have you seen instances where a diverse workplace has been a challenge for your staff?”

The employers responded to this question by saying as a whole, diversity is celebrated, and this extends to a respectful workplace. It is not unusual to have isolated incidents, but they are dealt with per company policy. During COVID there have been instances leading to comments, between vaccinated and non-vaccinated employees, which has exposed cultural and religious difference. Employers have policies and processes in place to deal with these instances, and continue to look at opportunities where learning can take place through raising awareness, messaging or communication, and engagement, such as cultural diversity training.

Employers described a welcoming and inclusive workplace as a place where employees are welcomed from the beginning through the hiring and orientation process, using clear communication and ongoing training. Employers also identified strong leadership to create a respectful workplace for all employees, always open to opportunities to continue to develop a welcoming and inclusive workplace.

Employers appreciated EIS as a third party resource that provide supports, programs and services for newcomers.

Conclusion

The employers interviewed in this phase of the study confirmed that they are experiencing staff shortages in workplaces throughout the Eastman region. A majority of employers in the study indicate that they need employees immediately and project significant increases in the next three to five years. An aging population leaving the workforce will impact the labour supply, and employers are interested in hiring newcomers to Canada as a solution to meet staffing needs.

The goal of the employer interviews was to identify challenges and success of hiring, orientation and training of newcomer employees to identify gaps and areas of opportunity for growth. Nearly all of the employers have processes in place to manage the human resource function. One employer has managed this function through a recruitment program, bringing workers from the Philippines to their workplace with great success. This recruitment strategy, however, is not commonly used by other employers in the Eastman region. One of the key challenges identified was that the labour pool was not big enough, and the need for more employees is immediate.

One area of opportunity is to further explore the option of an immigration initiative as an element of an economic development strategy for the region. This would require community stakeholders, including municipal governments, economic development organizations, employers, and Chambers of Commerce to collaborate to develop an immigration initiative specific for the Eastman region.

Appendix G



Eastman Employer interview questions

Employer/Business Name _____

Number of

Employees _____ Sector _____

Community where business is located _____

1. Can you describe your experiences finding and retaining new employees based on the following:

a. Do you need workers now or in the near future?

b. Challenges finding new employees:

c. What's working:

2. From your perspective, as an employer who hires immigrants, how would you describe this experience in your workplace, based on the following:

a. What are the strengths?

b. What are the challenges?

c. What is the rate of retention?

d. Are there women in your workplace?

e. How difficult is it to manage the Human Resource function regarding recognition of credentials of immigrant candidates?

f. What resources do HR's use for reference?

3. From your experience, what difficulties do immigrants have in finding and keeping jobs? (For reference, the list below are examples of some challenges).

- a. Communication challenges due to low language skills
- b. Understanding the job
- c. Understanding Canadian workplace expectations
- d. Workplace health and safety
- e. Cultural differences
- f. Housing
- g. Transportation
- h. Other

4. At your workplace, what are some of the employment challenges that your immigrant employees experience?

5. As the demographic changes in our growing communities, there is an increased awareness of discrimination and anti-racism sentiments. Have you seen instances where a diverse workplace has been a challenge for your staff?

Yes _____

No _____

Comments _____

a. If yes, how do you as an employer/business owner address diversity situations? _____

b. Have you used, or are you aware of workplace culture and diversity training resources?

Yes _____

No _____

Comments _____

c. Would you be interested in learning more about workplace culture and diversity training resources?

Yes _____

No _____

Comments _____

6. What are some of the things that you believe make a workplace a “welcoming community”?

a. What supports or resources would be beneficial for your workplace to become more welcoming?

7. What resources would be helpful to you as an employer/business owner? (The list below may be helpful)

- a. Increased knowledge about local resources and organizations, such as EIS and RRC
- b. Increased knowledge of workplace cultural training opportunities
- c. Participation in on-site workplace language training
- d. WHMIS training, Workplace Health and Safety training with interpreters
- e. Increased knowledge of the immigration process
- f. Increased knowledge of mentorship or job shadowing opportunities
- g. Increased knowledge of apprenticeship, credentials assessments
- h. Other

8. Please add comments on areas that we haven’t covered in the questions above: _____

