

PATHWAYS TO BELONGING

A COLLABORATIVE VISION FOR NEWCOMER SUCCESS
IN THE SAINT JOHN REGION

As co-chairs of the Saint John Local Immigration Partnership (SJLIP), we are proud to present this Regional Immigration Strategy, a road map designed to support and sustain the growth and integration of newcomers in our region.

Immigration is vital to the vibrancy and sustainability of our community. It enriches us culturally, enhances our economic resilience, and ensures the continued development of our workforce. At a time when global movement and local opportunity intersect more than ever, our region stands at the forefront of embracing diversity and fostering inclusivity.

This strategy reflects the collective efforts of stakeholders across sectors—businesses, government, community organizations, and individuals—who are committed to making our region a welcoming and inclusive place for all. Through extensive consultation and collaboration, we have identified key priorities and actionable steps to attract, retain, and empower newcomers.

Our vision is clear: to create a community where newcomers not only choose to settle but also thrive. From encouraging community collaboration and strengthening supports for employment, to celebrating the cultural contributions of our immigrant population, this strategy outlines a comprehensive approach to building a stronger, more cohesive region.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all those who contributed to this strategy. Your insights, experiences, and dedication have been invaluable in shaping its direction. We also recognize the remarkable resilience and aspirations of newcomers, whose stories inspire this work every day.

Together, we can build a future where everyone has the opportunity to belong, succeed, and contribute to the shared prosperity of our region. Let us help them succeed and stay.

MOHAMED BAGHA
& ANDREW BECKETT

SJLIP CO-CHAIRS



REGIONAL POPULATION GROWTH
FROM 2015-2024 (NET):

14,016 PEOPLE
(10.91%)



COMPONENTS OF GROWTH BETWEEN
2015-2024:

Permanent Residents:

10,904



Non Permanent Residents:

3,719



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
2019 - 2025:

2,997



EDUCATION LEVEL:

Between 2015 - 2023

62.2%

of immigrants to the
Saint John Region were
highly skilled and held post-
secondary education.



POPULATION
FORECASTING:

By 2030 - the regional population is
forecasted to sit at

159,644

which is a growth of 17,211 people or
12.2% between 2024-2030.



FIVE-YEAR RETENTION RATE:

6 OUT OF 10



newcomers stayed in the region
five years after arrival.

AGE DEMOGRAPHICS
(LABOUR FORCE):

Between 2015-2023

72.5%

of immigrants to the
Saint John Region were
working age.



LABOUR FORCE
FORECASTING:

By 2030 - the regional labour
force is expected to grow to

84,900

Increasing 11.9% between
2024 and 2030.

DEFINITIONS

IMMIGRANT

An immigrant is a person who moves to Canada from another country with the intention of settling permanently. Immigrants can be granted permanent resident status, allowing them to live and work in Canada indefinitely. They can apply for Canadian citizenship after fulfilling residency requirements. Canada admits immigrants through several streams, including economic immigration (e.g., Provincial Nominee Program, Express Entry), family sponsorship, and refugee resettlement programs.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

An international student is a foreign national who comes to Canada on a temporary basis to pursue education. These students hold study permits that allow them to attend Canadian educational institutions (e.g., universities, colleges, high schools). International students may be eligible for post-graduate work permits (PGWP) after completing their studies, allowing them to work in Canada for a limited time. Some may transition to permanent residency through immigration pathways like the Canadian Experience Class or Provincial Nominee Program.

REFUGEE

A refugee is a person who has fled their home country due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Canada resettles refugees mainly through two programs:

Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs): Refugees who are resettled to Canada through the assistance and sponsorship of the Canadian government.

Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs): Refugees sponsored by private groups or individuals in Canada. Refugees are granted permanent resident status upon arrival in Canada.

NEWCOMER

The term newcomer broadly refers to individuals who have recently arrived in Canada. It can apply to anyone who has moved to Canada, including immigrants, refugees, and international students. For this document, newcomer is used to describe people in the first five years of their integration process, particularly as they adapt to Canadian society, access services, and establish themselves in the country. This group may consist of people who have immigrated to the Saint John Region directly from another country, those who arrived in New Brunswick from another country and then moved to the Saint John Region or those who migrated from another Canadian province.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

02. DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

- Methodology
 - Project Phases
 - Key Principles
-

03. STRATEGIC PLAN

- Vision
- Mission
- Strategic Pillars, Initiatives and Actions (SOMIA)
 - STRATEGIC PILLAR: Coordinated Support and Advocacy
 - STRATEGIC PILLAR: Welcoming and Inclusive Communities
 - STRATEGIC PILLAR: Economic and Educational Opportunities for All

04. COORDINATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

- Alignment and accountability
-

05. CONCLUSION

06. BIBLIOGRAPHY

07. STEERING COMMITTEE AND ECOSYSTEM

01.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pathways to Belonging: A Collaborative Vision for Newcomer Success in the Saint John Region, presents a comprehensive framework designed to attract, integrate, and retain newcomers while fostering inclusivity and promoting regional growth in the Saint John Region.

The strategy emphasizes systemic change, inclusivity, and collective action to address critical gaps and leverage opportunities within the newcomer ecosystem. The vision articulated in the strategy seeks to create a region that welcomes newcomers, fosters their aspirations, and champions inclusivity. Its mission underscores the importance of collaboration and open communication to drive systemic change, enhance diversity, and build equitable communities supported by sustainable solutions for newcomers.

The strategy recognizes and builds upon existing success within the region’s ecosystem. The foundation provided by the Succeed & Stay Immigration Strategy, 2022¹ has delivered many positive results for the region. Key initiatives derived from that strategy include collaborative welcome events, job fairs, service navigation

tools, and a comprehensive newcomer website. These efforts, along with broader ecosystem achievements such as newcomer entrepreneurship, demonstrate ongoing success and should continue to be strengthened.

The strategy underscores the necessity of addressing systemic racism as a significant barrier to newcomer success. Building on insights from recent research in New Brunswick², the strategy advocates for consistent anti-racism education tailored to varying levels of understanding. Such efforts are vital for dismantling biases, promoting inclusion, and fostering equity within the community and broader ecosystem.

The strategy is supported by three core pillars, each with distinct initiatives and measurable outcomes. The first pillar, **Coordinated Support and Advocacy**, focuses on establishing shared communications, creating coordinated access models, and fostering collaboration among ecosystem partners. The second pillar, **Welcoming and Inclusive Communities**, prioritizes enhancing bilingual services, promoting cultural exchange, and building stronger connections between newcomers and long-term residents. The third pillar, **Economic and Educational Opportunities for All**, emphasizes aligning newcomer skills with industry needs, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in hiring newcomers, and addressing the unique challenges faced by international students and their families.

The methodology underpinning the strategy involves a phased approach—Analyze, Rethink, Transform—which integrates data-driven insights, stakeholder collaboration, and iterative validation. Data collection was varied and triangulated to ensure integrity. Key activities included a literature review specific to New Brunswick, one-on-one interviews³, stakeholder engagement through workshops and surveys, systems and asset mapping to identify barriers and gaps, and strategic retreats to refine priorities. This method ensures that the strategy is grounded in actionable and evidence-based solutions.

The Saint John Local Immigration Partnership (SJLIP) will oversee the strategy’s implementation and coordination, ensuring alignment among stakeholders, establishing sub-committees to address key priorities, and monitoring progress through shared metrics. By addressing systemic barriers, fostering collaboration, and supporting initiatives such as newcomer entrepreneurship and anti-racism education, the Saint John Region Immigration Strategy sets forth a bold and transformative vision. This vision positions the region as a leading destination for newcomers, driving social cohesion, economic growth, and a more inclusive community for all.

This strategy acknowledges systemic challenges—from healthcare and poverty to transportation, education, and beyond—which the SJLIP and the ecosystem are well-positioned to advocate for systemic change. In addition, municipalities/local communities within the region must develop their own operational plans that align with this strategy and give consideration to how their services are delivered through the lens of a newcomer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

The authors and stakeholders of this process have consistently acknowledged the landscape and the people of this region, both prior to European contact and during the subsequent development of this part of Canada. Accordingly, discussions emphasized priorities such as the recognition that the Saint John River is situated on the traditional territory of the Wolastoqiyik/Maliseet. The Wolastoqiyik/Maliseet, along with their Indigenous neighbours—the Mi’kmaq/Mi’kmaw and Passamaquoddy/Peskotomuhkati—entered into Peace and Friendship Treaties with the British Crown in the 1700s, which affirmed and protected their rights to lands and resources.

Moreover, the Saint John Region is home to a multigenerational Black community, many members of which have faced and continue to face systemic anti-Black racism. Nevertheless, the Black community has nurtured numerous advocates for inclusion and contributed significantly to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment. Finally, this acknowledgment recognizes the essential role that immigration has played in shaping the development of the Saint John Region and Canada as a whole.

02.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

In 2022, the City of Saint John published its Immigration Strategy (*Succeed & Stay Saint John Immigration Strategy*), which outlined a bold vision for fostering growth, inclusion, and sustainability through newcomer attraction, integration, and retention.

This strategy served as a critical framework for addressing systemic barriers and leveraging the potential of immigration to meet the region’s demographic and economic needs. The strategy emphasized several key objectives, including enhancing collaboration among stakeholders and expanding support for newcomers.

Two important factors from the 2022 Immigration Strategy have catalyzed this new exercise:

1. DEVELOPING A REGIONAL STRATEGY

One of the core tactics identified in the 2022 strategy was the need to regionalize the approach, transitioning from a city-centric perspective to a regional framework. This recognizes the interconnectedness of immigration success across municipalities within the Saint John Region. While the city receives the majority of newcomers to the region, this recognizes the importance of ensuring that all municipalities are equipped to support and integrate newcomers effectively. A regionalized strategy ensures shared resources, aligned goals, and coordinated efforts among municipalities, settlement agencies, employers, and other stakeholders to create a more cohesive and welcoming environment for newcomers.

2. UPDATING THE DATA LANDSCAPE

The data collected for the 2022 strategy was primarily gathered in 2019 and 2020, prior to the transformative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic shifts, and changes in immigration policies. These factors have reshaped the newcomer experience, labour market demands, housing availability, and community integration dynamics. This updated exercise provides an opportunity to reflect the current realities, ensuring that the strategy is both relevant and responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Building upon the foundation of the Succeed & Stay Saint John Immigration Strategy, 2022⁴, this initiative aims to provide a comprehensive, data-driven, and regionally inclusive plan. It seeks to address critical gaps, enhance coordination, and position the Saint John Region as a leader in creating welcoming and thriving communities for newcomers. This new strategy is not just an extension of the past but a forward-thinking blueprint for lasting impact.





METHODOLOGY

The Saint John Region’s Immigration Strategy employs a comprehensive, phased methodology designed to recognize existing documentation and plans relevant to the Saint John Region, while ensuring inclusive stakeholder engagement, robust analysis, and actionable outcomes.

The first layer of data was established through a literature review of key documents supplied by Envision Saint John.

The second layer of data arrived from one-on-one interviews as well as community consultations. All of this information informed the final two key stakeholder strategic planning discussions. The consultative approach is rooted in the **ART framework (Analyze, Rethink, Transform)**⁵ and incorporates a sequence of structured activities that integrate diverse perspectives, collaborative planning, and iterative validation.

⁵ Use of Proprietary Methodology : This strategy builds upon O Strategies Inc.’ proprietary strategic planning methodology, which has been specifically adapted to the unique needs of the Saint John Region.

PROJECT PHASES

1. ANALYZE PHASE

The Analyze phase focused on gathering data, identifying systemic barriers, and exploring opportunities to strengthen the region’s newcomer ecosystem. This phase included the following key activities:

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** A two-hour steering committee meeting identified key stakeholders, roles, and project milestones. This meeting established a shared purpose for the project.
- **Current State Assessment:** Analysis of demographic and labour market data contextualized the region’s immigration trends and needs.
- **Surveys and Interviews:**
 - Surveys (342 respondents) distributed to residents, including newcomers captured insights into community needs, service gaps, and opportunities.
 - In-depth interviews with emigrated newcomers provided critical insights into challenges like integration barriers and incentives for retention.
 - Municipal and industry partner interviews revealed key perspectives on regional labour market needs and system gaps.
- **Newcomer and Resident Dialogues:** Two bilingual dialogue sessions in September 2024 engaged 44 participants to surface hopes, fears, and actionable ideas for building an inclusive community.
- **Systems Mapping Workshop:** Twenty-eight ecosystem partners co-created visual representations of the newcomer ecosystem, identifying systemic barriers, resource limitations, and opportunities for better collaboration.
- **Asset Mapping:** This exercise highlighted strengths and service gaps in the regional newcomer support network.





2. RETHINK PHASE

The Rethink phase leveraged the findings from the Analyze phase to guide collaborative decision-making and strategic planning. Key steps in this phase included:

- **Strategic Planning Retreat:** Stakeholders reviewed findings and engaged in discussions to set strategic priorities, objectives, and key results.
- **SOMIA Session:** A Sense-Making, Opportunities, Metrics, Integration, and Alignment (SOMIA) workshop brought ecosystem partners together to refine strategic insights, explore opportunities, and draft preliminary recommendations.
- **Drafting the SOMIA Document:** Insights from the SOMIA session were synthesized into a formal document, which served as the basis for validation and subsequent planning stages.
- **Validation Session:** Stakeholders convened to review and validate the draft strategy, ensuring alignment and buy-in across the ecosystem.

3. TRANSFORM PHASE

The Transform phase focused on finalizing and operationalizing the strategy through a coordinated and collaborative approach. Steps included:

- **Evaluation Framework Development:** In a SJLIP Council meeting, stakeholders collaboratively designed an evaluation framework, incorporating social impact KPIs and metrics to measure progress.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Partners defined clear roles, responsibilities, and accountability measures to ensure successful implementation.
- **Coordination Model:** A structured coordination model was developed to streamline efforts and enhance collaboration across the ecosystem.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- **Inclusivity:** The methodology ensures that diverse voices—including newcomers, employers, municipal leaders, and service providers are incorporated throughout the process.
- **Collaboration:** Engaging stakeholders in all phases fosters shared ownership and collective responsibility for the strategy’s success.
- **Data-Driven:** Decisions are informed by qualitative and quantitative data collected through surveys, interviews, and workshops.
- **Iteration:** Feedback loops, such as the validation session, ensure the strategy evolves to reflect emerging insights and maintain stakeholder alignment.

This robust methodology ensures that the Saint John Region’s Immigration Strategy is grounded in evidence, shaped by collaboration, and designed for long-term impact. By integrating thoughtful analysis, collaborative decision-making, and structured implementation planning, this approach positions the region to achieve its vision of becoming a welcoming, inclusive community for all newcomers.





KEY THEMES FOR CONSIDERATION

As a result of the engagement with ecosystem members throughout the strategic planning process, the following themes have emerged. The Regional Strategic Plan that follows establishes an action plan to respond to these themes.

1. NEWCOMER INTEGRATION AND SUPPORT

While the region has made significant strides in becoming more welcoming, the data highlights gaps in employment opportunities, credential recognition, healthcare access, and affordable housing. These barriers affect not only the integration process but also the retention of newcomers. Stakeholders should focus on addressing these systemic gaps by improving service delivery, enhancing pre-arrival information, and fostering collaboration between settlement agencies and employers.

2. COMMUNITY AND SENSE OF BELONGING

Survey respondents consistently reported that the region feels “friendly but not welcoming,” reflecting a need to deepen engagement efforts that go beyond initial reception. Creating opportunities for social integration, reducing isolation, and encouraging meaningful connections between long-term residents and newcomers will be key to enhancing the sense of belonging. Stakeholders should consider expanding community programs, supporting ethno-cultural associations, and building more inclusive civic engagement opportunities.

3. RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

Despite progress in fostering a more inclusive region, many newcomers report experiencing racism and discrimination. These experiences negatively impact a newcomer’s ability to integrate and feel a true sense of belonging. Addressing systemic racism must be a core priority of the strategy. Stakeholders should invest in anti-racism education, encourage inclusive hiring practices, and strengthen reporting mechanisms for discrimination. Building trust through community dialogues and amplifying newcomer voices in decision-making processes will be key to fostering a truly welcoming environment.

4. ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND EMPLOYMENT

Employment is a central factor influencing newcomer satisfaction and retention. Many newcomers struggle with underemployment, with significant challenges related to credential recognition and access to professional networks. The Newcomer Employment Champion Program has had success but must be scaled and diversified across industries to meet the demand. The strategic plan should explore ways to further engage local employers, and create pathways to employment for newcomers.

5. HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Affordable housing and public transportation emerged as critical areas needing improvement. The housing crisis, in particular, is affecting newcomers’ ability to establish stable lives in the region. Stakeholders should prioritize affordable housing initiatives and ensure newcomers have access to reliable public transportation that connects them to employment, education, and community services.





6. YOUTH AND FAMILY RETENTION

The integration of families, particularly youth, requires targeted efforts. Programs focused on youth engagement, education, and after-school activities will be pivotal in retaining young families. Family programming that addresses the needs of spouses and children should be expanded.

7. SYSTEM COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

The system mapping exercise highlighted the need for greater coordination among service providers. Duplication of services, lack of collaboration, and strained resources were frequently cited as challenges. Stakeholders should consider how to streamline services, increase cross-sector collaboration, and build a more cohesive ecosystem that supports newcomers from arrival through long-term integration.

03.

STRATEGIC PLAN

STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic planning is more than a road map—it is a bold blueprint for systemic change.

This strategic plan is not about maintaining the status quo - it is a call to action to address critical gaps, challenge existing barriers, and create a more inclusive, supportive, and thriving environment for newcomers in the Saint John Region. It reflects a commitment to transformation and progress, ensuring that the region evolves into a destination where newcomers can truly belong, succeed, and prosper.

This plan has been co-created by a diverse group of ecosystem partners, including municipal leaders, settlement agencies, businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations. Through collaboration and collective

insight, the Saint John Region’s stakeholders have identified systemic challenges and opportunities that must be addressed to unlock the full potential of immigration for the region.

Recognizing the importance of a cohesive approach, **this strategy underlines the need for the regions’ municipalities and communities to develop their own corporate plans in alignment with this plan and the ecosystems’ non-profit organizations.** Such plans should integrate initiatives that foster a strong internal culture, set and achieve environmental, social and governance impact targets, provide comprehensive Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training, service accessibility or availability, among other efforts.

The SJLIP will take the lead in developing key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the success of this strategy. These KPIs will prioritize **social impact**, ensuring that progress is evaluated

not just in numbers, but in meaningful outcomes for newcomers, their families, and the community. By focusing on areas such as inclusion, equity, and integration, the KPIs will provide a clear framework for tracking and enhancing the region’s capacity to support newcomers.

Most elements within this strategic plan represent identified gaps or areas that require significant improvement. Whether it’s addressing barriers to employment, or fostering deeper social integration, this plan is designed to confront the challenges head-on, while maintaining what works within the system.

Below is the vision, mission and strategies that aims to not only attract newcomers but also empower them to stay, grow, and contribute to the community’s success. Together, we can create a future that is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable for all.

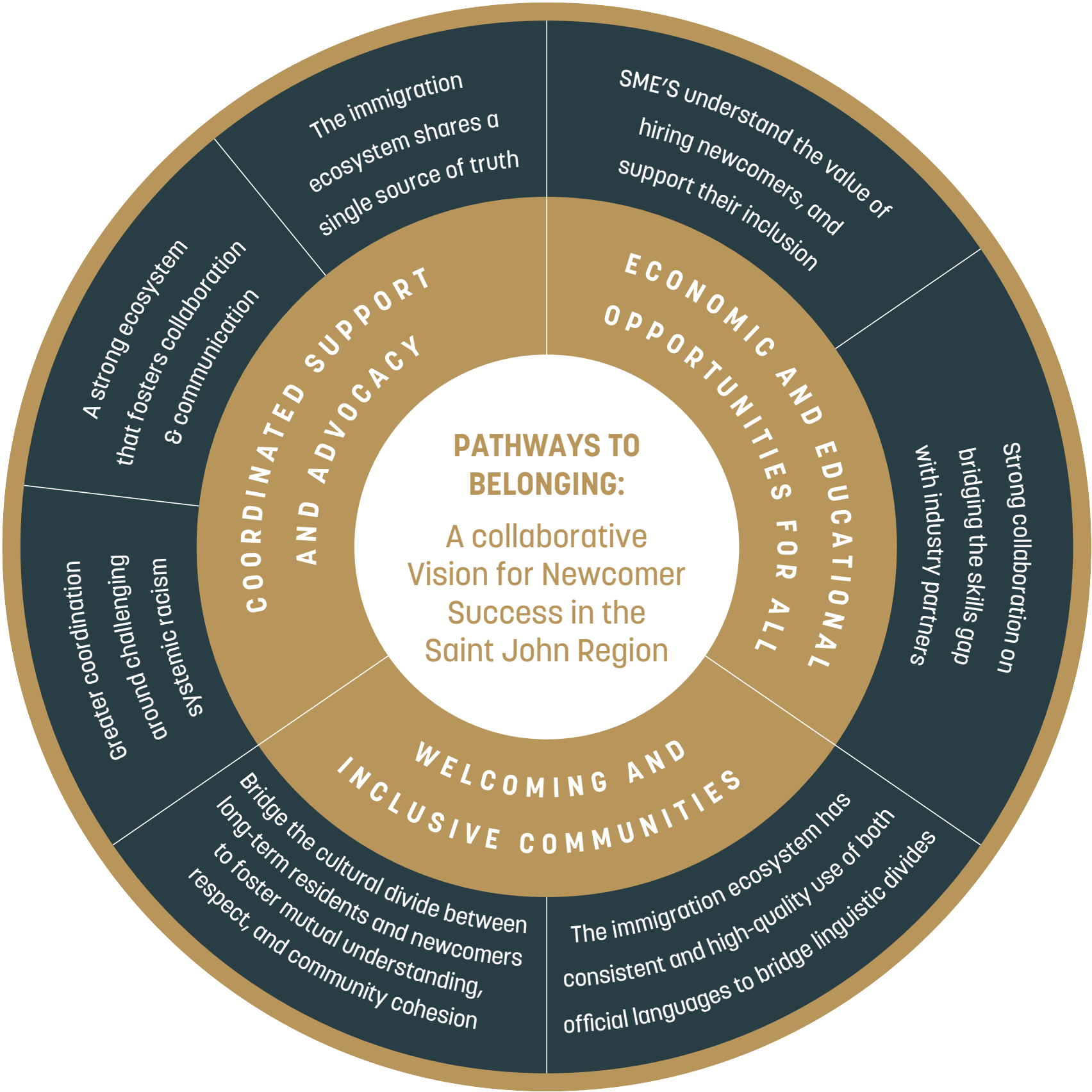


VISION

A Saint John Region that welcomes newcomers, supports their dreams, and champions inclusivity.

MISSION

Through collaboration and open communication, we drive change, foster diversity, and create welcoming, equitable communities with sustainable solutions for newcomers.



STRATEGIC PILLARS, INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS (SOMIA)

STRATEGIC PILLAR: COORDINATED SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY

This pillar ensures the immigration ecosystem operates as a cohesive and well-coordinated network, enabling stakeholders to collaborate effectively. It focuses on creating a single source of truth for resources, data, and projects through a centralized Open Data Portal. By streamlining access and reducing duplication of efforts, the pillar facilitates the development of coordinated access and assessment models and promotes a unified approach to addressing systemic racism. Through education campaigns, community engagement, and collaborative advocacy, this pillar aims to foster an inclusive and supportive environment for newcomers and immigrants.

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	INITIATIVES	ACTIONS
THE IMMIGRATION ECOSYSTEM SHARES A SINGLE SOURCE OF TRUTH			
<p>EXPECTED RESULTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A centralized platform provides streamlined access to resources, data, and projects for all stakeholders in the immigration ecosystem.• Improved coordination and reduced duplication of efforts across organizations in the Saint John Region.• Feasibility of coordinated access and assessment models is assessed and actioned as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completion and launch of an Immigration Ecosystem Open Data Portal within a defined timeline.• Completion of the feasibility study on Coordinated Access and Assessment models and actionable recommendations.• User Satisfaction of the Open Data Portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a shared platform to streamline the immigration ecosystem data sharing & distrib• Explore Coordinated Access and Assessment model• Create an ecosystem-wide service navigation model for newcomers and immigrants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Streamline access to resources, projects, and key information for organizations in the Saint John Region Immigration ecosystem.• Develop an “Open Data Portal⁶” funded and regularly updated to serve as a centralized information hub.• Conduct a feasibility study.• Conduct Stakeholder Engagement & Service Mapping• Review Current Navigation Framework & Integrate with the Open Data Portal.• Create a plan to coordinate and sustain and launch the ecosystem-wide service navigation model
A STRONG ECOSYSTEM THAT FOSTERS COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION			
<p>EXPECTED RESULTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Local Immigration Partnership (SJLIP) is established as a convening and coordinating body for immigration-related efforts in the Saint John Region.• Enhanced communication and collaboration among ecosystem partners through shared systems and regular meetings.• Shared performance metrics enable consistent tracking of ecosystem success.• Municipalities are recognized as key players in the newcomer ecosystem, actively contributing to strategy implementation and alignment with local priorities.• Strengthened municipal capacity to support newcomer integration through tailored policies, programs, and community engagement initiatives.• Ecosystem partners collaboratively advocate for social changes impacting newcomers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of active sub-committees and regularity of their meetings.• Adoption and use of shared folders or information-sharing systems by ecosystem partners.• Development and tracking of shared KPIs with progress reported to all partners.• Partner feedback on improved collaboration and communication through surveys or interviews.• Number of advocacy issues ecosystem partners collaborative address.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empower the SJLIP to convene ecosystem partners around collective opportunities and issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a structure & hold regular ecosystem meetings with outcome-based goals for municipalities.• Develop a structure & hold regular ecosystem meetings with outcome-based goals for francophone communities.• Develop a structure & hold regular ecosystem meetings with outcome-based goals for indigenous communities.• Build an information-sharing system (ex: shared folders) for communication on events, holiday programming, and information sessions.• Establish shared KPIs for ecosystem performance tracking.• Convene ecosystem partners around advocacy to address service or programming gaps and emergent situations.



OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	INITIATIVES	ACTIONS
GREATER COORDINATION AROUND CHALLENGING SYSTEMIC RACISM			
<p>EXPECTED RESULTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased awareness and understanding of systemic racism among community members and organizations.A shift in public sentiment and rhetoric to be more inclusive and supportive of newcomers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Marketing impact metrics of positive newcomer stories shared through media or other platforms.Positive trends in surveys measuring changes in public attitudes toward immigration and diversity.Reduction in anti-immigration rhetoric observed in public discourse or local media over time.Number of racial discrimination complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Present a collaborative approach to address & measure systemic racism.Collaborate on communication strategies to combat anti-immigration rhetoric.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Launch education campaigns (e.g., Center for Excellence on addressing misconceptions and safe-space dialogue) to reduce systemic racism and biases.Partner with policing and justice authorities to enhance newcomer safety and community engagement.Collect and analyze data on reported incidents to identify trends and areas needing targeted action.Publish an annual report card on the region's progress in reducing racial discrimination incidents.Create position papers, share positive stories of newcomers, and develop inclusivity campaigns to shift public perception.

**Notes: A Coordinated Access and Assessment model is a model that exists in the homelessness sector. Here is the proposed definition by the Government of Canada : “The shift to Coordinated Access supports an integrated systems-based approach where service providers, local communities and orders of government work together to achieve common goals. With Coordinated Access, communities will gather comprehensive data on their local homeless population. In time, communities will be able to establish baselines against which progress will be measured. Communities will be able to monitor trends at the community level, allowing for the sharing of successes as well as determining where more focus or a change in course is needed.”*

STRATEGIC PILLAR:
WELCOMING AND
INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

This pillar emphasizes fostering a sense of belonging and cultural integration for the newcomer and immigrant population by bridging linguistic and cultural divides. It promotes inclusivity through services, cultural exchange events, and collaborative efforts between long-term residents and newcomers and immigrants in both official languages. By strengthening partnerships and supporting events that highlight diversity, this pillar builds understanding and respect while creating opportunities for social connection and mutual support.

**Notes: This is a new initiative emanating from the revision of the Official Languages Act⁸*

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	INITIATIVES	ACTIONS
THE ECOSYSTEM HAS CONSISTENT AND HIGH-QUALITY USE OF BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES TO BRIDGE LINGUISTIC DIVIDES.			
EXPECTED RESULTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Improved access to services in both official languages for newcomers.Increased awareness and utilization of francophone services by newcomers.Strengthened collaboration among francophone partners to support services in both official languages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Completion and integration of the francophone services directory into the "Open Data Portal."Securing funding from the Centre d'innovation en immigration francophone or similar sources.Feedback from francophone newcomers on the accessibility and quality of services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Create a directory of francophone services to support francophone newcomers effectively.Conduct a francophone immigration services plan (Plan de service en immigration francophone)Foster a welcoming atmosphere through inclusive events.Ensure a coordinated effort through the SJLIP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Collaborate with Table Franco and local partners to integrate the directory of francophone services into the centralized "Open Data Portal," while ensuring it aligns with the coordinated access model.Explore funding available through the Center for Innovation for francophone immigration (Centre d'innovation en immigration francophone).*Identify champions within organizations that can support logistics in both official languages.Develop a resource guide for funding sources for events or translation services in both official languages.Hold regular meetings through the SJLIP (ensuring francophone representation) & create a sub-committee for francophone partners.
BRIDGE THE CULTURAL DIVIDE BETWEEN LONG-TERM RESIDENTS AND NEWCOMERS TO FOSTER MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, RESPECT, AND COMMUNITY COHESION.			
EXPECTED RESULTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stronger relationships between newcomers and long-term residents through shared experiences.Increased understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity within the community.Reduced stereotypes and biases against newcomers through positive narratives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Participation rates of newcomers and long-term residents in cultural exchange activities.Number of community service projects completed collaboratively by newcomers and long-term residents.Impact metrics of positive stories promoted through local media outlets showcasing successful collaborations between newcomers and long-term residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Host cultural exchange events and dialogues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Organize facilitated dialogue sessions where newcomers and long-term residents can share their stories, cultural practices, and experiences in a safe and respectful space.Identify and support promotion of events that celebrate the cultural diversity of newcomers while showcasing local traditions, such as food festivals, art exhibits, storytelling nights, or intergenerational activities.Create and share opportunities for long-term residents and newcomers to work together on community service projects.Work with local media outlets to highlight success stories of long-term residents and newcomers working together, promoting positive narratives and reducing stereotypes.

STRATEGIC PILLAR:
ECONOMIC AND
EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

This pillar drives economic success and educational achievement by aligning newcomer skills with industry needs. It focuses on engaging SMEs to recognize the value of hiring newcomers and collaborating with post-secondary institutions to address challenges faced by international students and their families. By building partnerships and creating targeted training and upskilling programs, the pillar supports both individual and regional economic growth.

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	INITIATIVES	ACTIONS
SME'S UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF HIRING NEWCOMERS, AND SUPPORT THEIR INCLUSION			
<p>EXPECTED RESULTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased hiring of newcomers by SMEs in the region.Improved understanding and appreciation of newcomer talent among SMEs.Strengthened support systems for SMEs to include newcomers effectively in their workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased participation of SMEs in the newcomer ecosystem, including recruitment events, training sessions, and programs like the Newcomer Employment Champions (NEC) Program.Strengthened systems and tools to support SMEs in effectively including newcomers in their workforce.Percentage of use and impact of tools and resources developed and accessed by SMEs to support newcomer inclusion.Percentage increase in newcomers hired by SMEs.Positive feedback from SMEs on the relevance and impact of ecosystem support initiatives.	<p>Drive economic success by engaging small and medium-sized employers in the newcomer ecosystem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Understand gaps in services for SME's.Collect and analyze data on economic growth to adapt objectives (integrated in the open-data system)Develop a directory for SME's on services available to them and coordinate with the NEC program and ecosystem to address gaps (tools, sessions for SMEs, supporting their inclusion efforts).
STRONG COLLABORATION ON BRIDGING THE SKILLS GAP WITH INDUSTRY PARTNERS			
<p>EXPECTED RESULTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Improved alignment between newcomer skills and industry needs.Increased participation of industry partners in initiatives to bridge skills gaps.Enhanced access to targeted training and upskilling programs for newcomers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Number of collaborative training programs developed and implemented.Percentage of newcomers participating in upskilling programs who secure employment in their trained sectors.Employer satisfaction with the alignment of newcomer skills to industry needs.	<p>Collaborate with post-secondary institutions to address challenges faced by international students and their families.</p> <p>Establish industry-specific subcommittees or working groups to foster regular dialogue on skills alignment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop a combined strategy to target gaps.Develop a combined strategy for wrap-around supports.Work with local government and industry associations to align policies, programs and supports for hiring and upskilling newcomers.

04.

COORDINATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

COORDINATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Saint John Region Local Immigration Partnership (SJLIP) serves as the cornerstone for coordinating the region’s immigration strategy, ensuring alignment and collaboration across all ecosystem partners.

Acting as a unifying body, the SJLIP facilitates engagement among stakeholders at every level, including government agencies, community organizations, educational institutions, industry partners, and cultural groups.

To align with the new Immigration Strategy, this document recommends a revision of the current SJLIP structure to better support the strategy’s priorities and advance its vision. This may involve restructuring existing roles or establishing new groups and sub-committees that are specifically tailored to the strategy’s objectives. These could focus on areas such as francophone services, economic integration, cultural inclusion, and systemic racism reduction, ensuring dedicated efforts for each strategic pillar.

The creation or adaptation of these groups would be guided by clear charters and shared principles, designed to address priority challenges and drive progress in a focused and measurable way. By fostering a culture of collaboration, regularly

convening partners, and establishing shared performance metrics, the SJLIP or its evolved framework would ensure that the strategy remains adaptable and impactful, reflecting the evolving needs of newcomers and the aspirations of the region.

This strategic realignment offers an opportunity to strengthen coordination, streamline efforts, and build a more resilient immigration ecosystem that empowers newcomers and enhances the social and economic fabric of the Saint John Region. Through these changes, the region will be better equipped to translate its bold vision into sustained action and measurable outcomes.





ALIGNMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

To ensure continuity and alignment, this strategy builds on the City of Saint John’s 2022 Immigration Strategy targets.

These established targets provide a strong foundation while new ones will be co-created with the ecosystem to align with the priorities and SOMIA framework of the current strategy. This approach ensures that efforts remain consistent and data-driven as the ecosystem adapts to emerging challenges and opportunities.

The strategy adopts existing targets as interim measures, focusing on:

- **Coordinated ecosystem:** Building on the success of attracting newcomers through a more unified and aligned ecosystem approach.

- **Promote francophone immigration:** Enhancing coordination and integration efforts to better support the services and settlement of Francophone immigrants.
- **Newcomer retention rates:** Increasing the percentage of newcomers who remain in the region.
- **Economic integration:** Tracking the number of newcomers employed through SME engagement.
- **Community connections:** Monitoring participation in cultural exchange events, mentorship programs, and activities that foster belonging.

By maintaining these targets, the strategy demonstrates consistency and ensures ongoing progress while allowing time for refinement.

Recognizing the need for continuous improvement, the Saint John Local Immigration Partnership (SJLIP) will lead efforts to review existing targets (from the Succeed and Stay Saint John Immigration Strategy, and from ecosystem organizations) to ensure they align with current

realities. Additionally, KPIs will be developed, focused on social impact, inclusivity, and economic success.

To track and enhance the region’s newcomer ecosystem, the strategy emphasizes a robust data framework including a centralized open data portal, shared performance metrics and continuous stakeholder engagement.

As part of the strategy, the SJLIP will convene partners to:

- Validate and adjust current targets.
- Co-create KPIs that reflect shared priorities.
- Establish regular reporting cycles to track progress and maintain accountability.

This strategy ensures that all targets and KPIs are not only relevant but also actionable. By balancing continuity with adaptability, it positions the Saint John Region to measure success effectively, address gaps, and achieve meaningful outcomes for newcomers and the community. Through collaboration and clear metrics, this plan offers a road map for sustained progress and impact.

05.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

This strategy represents a bold, transformative effort to build on the past, and create a more inclusive, supportive, and thriving community for newcomers.

This plan is a collective achievement, co-created by ecosystem partners who share a commitment to addressing systemic barriers and unlocking opportunities for all.

Through its strategic pillars, the strategy provides a clear road map to enhance coordinated support, foster welcoming and inclusive communities, and drive economic and educational opportunities.

It reflects a shared recognition that systemic change is essential—not only to attract newcomers but also to integrate and retain them as valued members of the community.

Implementation and coordination through the SJLIP will empower the ecosystemic partners, drive collaboration, align efforts, and maintain momentum to drive the strategic initiatives toward impact. This strategy is more than a plan—it is a call to action for all stakeholders to work together to build a region where newcomers feel welcomed, supported, and empowered to succeed. By addressing gaps, strengthening what works, and fostering a shared vision, the Saint John Region is positioned to become a national leader in immigration and inclusion, driving both social cohesion and economic prosperity for years to come.



06.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

City of Saint John. (2022). <i>Saint John Immigration Strategy: Building a Welcoming and Inclusive Community</i> . Retrieved from	https://saintjohn.ca/sites/default/files/2022-11/Saint%20John%20Immigration%20Strategy_English_Nov.%2018%20%281%29.pdf
Employment and Social Development Canada. (2019). <i>The Social and Economic Benefits of Immigration to Canada</i> . Retrieved from	https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2019/edsc-esdc/Em12-66-2019-eng.pdf
Government of Canada. (2023). <i>Official Languages Action Plan 2023–2028: Protection – Promotion – Progress</i> . Canadian Heritage. Retrieved from	https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/official-languages-bilingualism/official-languages-action-plan/2023-2028.html
Varma, M. (2022). <i>Systemic Racism Commissioner’s Final Report</i> . Government of New Brunswick. Retrieved from	https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Corporate/Promo/systemicracism-racismesystemique/SystemicRacismCommissionerFinalReport.pdf

07.

STEERING COMMITTEE AND ECOSYSTEM PARTNER LIST

STEERING COMMITTEE

- Association Régionale de la Communauté francophones (ARCf) de Saint Jean
- Centre d'accueil francophone d'immigration
- City of Saint John
- Envision Saint John
- Fundy Regional Service Commission
- Immigration NB
- J. D. Irving Ltd.
- New Brunswick Community College
- Opportunities New Brunswick (ONB)
- PRUDE Inc.
- Saint John Local Immigration Partnership (SJLIP)
- Saint John Newcomers Centre
- Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce
- University of New Brunswick
- Working NB
- YMCA of Southwestern NB - Newcomer Connections

ECOSYSTEM PARTNERS⁹

- Anglophone School District - South
- Association Régionale de la Communauté francophones (ARCf) de Saint Jean
- Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada
- Centre d'Accueil et d'Accompagnement Francophone des Immigrants du Nouveau Brunswick (CAFi)
- City of Saint John
- Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick
- District scolaire francophone Sud
- Envision Saint John
- Fundy Regional Service Commission
- Government of New Brunswick - Department of Health
- Human Development Council
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- Immigration NB
- J. D. Irving Ltd.
- New Brunswick Community College
- Newcomer Advisory Panel of the Saint John Local Immigration Partnership
- Opportunities NB
- PRUDE Inc
- Saint John Construction Association
- Saint John Local Immigration Partnership (SJLIP)
- Saint John Newcomers Centre
- Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce
- Service Canada
- University of New Brunswick
- Working NB
- YMCA of Southwestern NB - Newcomer Connections