



Finance and Corporate Services Committee 2026 Public Budget Agenda

Monday, November 24, 2025, 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Council Chambers - Hybrid

City of Kitchener

200 King Street W, Kitchener, ON N2G 4G7

People interested in participating in this meeting can register online using the delegation registration form at www.kitchener.ca/delegation or via email at delegation@kitchener.ca. Please refer to the delegation section on the agenda below for registration in-person and electronic participation deadlines. Written comments received will be circulated prior to the meeting and will form part of the public record.

The meeting live-stream and archived videos are available at www.kitchener.ca/watchnow.

Accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request. If you require assistance to take part in a city meeting or event, please call 519-741-2345 or TTY 1-866-969-9994.

Chair: Councillor S. Davey

Vice-Chair: Councillor B. Ioannidis

Pages

1. Commencement

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

Members of Council and members of the City's local boards/committees are required to file a written statement when they have a conflict of interest. If a conflict is declared, please visit www.kitchener.ca/conflict to submit your written form.

3. Delegations

Pursuant to Council's Procedural By-law, delegations are permitted to address the Committee for a maximum of five (5) minutes. All Delegations where possible are encouraged to register prior to the start of the meeting. For Delegates who are attending in-person, registration is permitted up to the start of the meeting. Delegates who are interested in attending virtually must register

by 4:00 p.m. on November 23, 2025, in order to participate electronically.

4. 2026 Budget - Public Consultation

The purpose of this meeting is to receive feedback from the public on the 2026 Budget. Budget materials can be found at www.kitchener.ca/meetings or at www.kitchener.ca/budget.

4.1 Delegations

4.1.a Ian McLean, Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership Council

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5. Adjournment

Dianna Saunderson

Manager of Council/Committee Services & Deputy Clerk

November 2025

To: Mayor Vrbanovic and Kitchener City Council

Re: Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership Update, Regional Immigration Strategy and Request for Investment in the Immigration Partnership

More than 16 years ago municipal, business and other community leaders like then Region of Waterloo CAO Mike Murray launched the Immigration Partnership, recognizing the economic and social significance of immigration to regional communities. They expanded on an earlier initiative called the Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network hosted by the Greater KW Chamber of Commerce which focused on supporting local business in meeting talent needs through immigration.

Immigration has grown significantly across the region. In 2021, Kitchener was home to 75,450 immigrants according to census, representing almost 30% of the overall population. The last five years have seen a surge of arrivals.

The Immigration Partnership brings together hundreds of public, private and non-profit partners to make Waterloo Region's urban and rural communities inclusive places where immigrants thrive and contribute to shared prosperity and growth. This includes several City of Kitchener staff partners, whose collaboration we greatly appreciate.

This year the more than 70 organizations that make up the Immigration Partnership developed the 6th successive Waterloo Region Immigration Strategy (attached). The Immigration Partnership Council presented it to the Region of Waterloo Council in June. It was unanimously endorsed, with robust discussion of the strategy, Immigration's Partnership's work across the region, and the need to secure the sustainability of this shared work. We undertook to bring the strategy of all of Waterloo Region's area municipalities.

Since then, Immigration Partnership Council leaders have appreciated the opportunity to meet with area Mayors and municipal leaders around the region in advance of tonight's meeting.

Impact of the Immigration Partnership

Immigrant, community, health, housing, education and other service partners; business, post secondary and municipal organizations; and cultural, faith, grassroots and other groups work together through the Immigration Partnership. They touch on urban and rural regional communities, and together they have driven significant change.

- We know significantly more about immigration and local immigrant experiences.

- Partners across sectors, including our municipal partners, use our data and insights to build capacity to effectively support +10,000 newcomers each year in accessing housing, schools, health care and other services across regional communities.
- We have helped hundreds of local businesses to adapt workplace practices and fill critical roles with newcomer talent, launching innovative community programs like the Workplace Immigrant Network and the Newcomer Work Experience Program.
- We have enabled many community, health and other service organizations to adjust services and collaborate strategically, making services more efficient: 70% of partners are better coordinated with others, make better service referrals, and have new partnerships to better serve residents.
- We have helped dozens of grassroots and cultural partners gain visibility, grow community leadership, and secure investment and partnerships to build up their communities.
- We lead the initiative to secure and channel \$2M in local funding to local organizations supporting refugees and other newcomers during significant refugee events. We provide dedicated coordination of services for refugee populations, international students and temporary foreign workers in our rural and urban communities.
- We have helped to leverage millions of dollars in investment to partners for community, cultural, health, mental health and other services, skills development and more.
- We have helped build a culture of welcoming, social connectedness, inclusion, and belonging for all. Residents – newcomers and Canadian-born alike – are benefiting from this work.

2025-2028 Waterloo Region Immigration Strategy

The new strategy reflects an ongoing commitment to both immigrants and our regional communities, and more than 70 partner organizations remain engaged in supporting immigration in the region to safeguard future economic and social resilience. The strategy is grounded in the expertise of almost 1700 immigrants, partner organizations and the wider community, and it aligns with the themes of the City's Strategic Plan and specifically its work to develop a municipal newcomer strategy.

Through this region-wide strategy, we will build capacity across region communities so that local services can meet the needs of the changing population, so employers will have the tools and resources to leverage the skills of immigrants and so our regional communities are increasingly welcoming.

Four strategic priorities will guide this shared work:

- The first is to gather insights and evidence to develop our shared understanding of immigration and its ecosystem and build support for immigration
- The second is to mobilize partners and community leadership to improve access to information and supports for partners and immigrants and to make change addressing the primary needs and integration of immigrants
- The third is to influence public, private and non-profit decision makers to make changes and investments that improve immigrant settlement, work and belonging, and guide employers to actively improve immigrant employment.

- The fourth is to build organizational resilience by engaging partners and staff with appropriate skills and influence, and ensuring Immigration Partnership funding, governance and structures optimize performance

The Future Importance of This Work

As community leaders, we are certain the Immigration Partnership is more important now than ever. The Region, area municipalities, Chambers of Commerce and others all have strategies focused on preparing for growth to 1 million residents. Immigration is the single biggest factor driving population and labour force growth, and it is increasingly pushing out into rural communities. More than one in four residents in Waterloo Region are already immigrants, who are changing demographics, revitalizing neighbourhoods and strengthening local business.

We must do the work to welcome, settle and include the several hundred thousand newcomers who are here now and continuing to arrive across the region. The Immigration Partnership is a key mechanism for this. Hundreds of public, private, and nonprofit partners have made changes that are helping build better communities.

What We are Asking of The City of Kitchener

1. We are asking Kitchener City Council to endorse and align to the goals of the Waterloo Region Immigration Strategy.
2. We are asking Kitchener City Council to invest \$25,000 annually in the shared work of the Immigration Partnership.

Since the beginning, the Region of Waterloo and United Way Waterloo Region Communities have shown leadership, respectively providing \$50,000 and \$40,000 each year to grow the collaborative work of the Immigration Partnership. With this, we have leveraged federal and provincial investments in the range of \$650,000 annually. The organizations and individuals that make up the Immigration Partnership, including municipal partners, have further contributed in-kind staff and other resources to this shared work.

The Immigration Partnership Council is working to address a roughly \$230,000 annual budget deficit for this collaborative initiative. This budget gap threatens to undo all of the work we have collectively done as a Partnership for our regional communities. It puts this Partnership, essential community infrastructure, at risk. Without working together:

- The several hundred thousand immigrants that will move to this region in coming years will face greater barriers to support and more instability, poverty, and exclusion, undermining economic, social and community development across the region.
- Services will fragment, wasting resources and leaving gaps.
- Businesses would struggle even more with labour shortages.
- In short, the shared vision of thriving at one million residents will be much harder to realize.

This request comes at a time of uncertainty and budgetary pressures, and yet it is essential. The Immigration Partnership is pursuing a diversified approach to sustainability, which includes long-term philanthropic and business investments, greater municipal investment, member contributions, and more. The Waterloo Region Community Foundation has made a \$50,000 commitment over two years and outreach continues. No one partner should carry this alone - it is a community effort.

We are working to ensure that immigration strengthens, not strains, Waterloo Region's social and economic fabric. We are asking that the City of Kitchener support our shared efforts in building effective local approaches to supporting immigrants and leveraging the beneficial community impacts of immigration through coordinated systems, appropriate services, strategic partnerships, and public support for immigration.

We are also offering ongoing partnership and the Immigration Partnership's collective engagement and support in strategic, community and economic development planning and service improvement processes.

On behalf of the Immigration Partnership Council, we thank you for your leadership and for supporting our shared future.

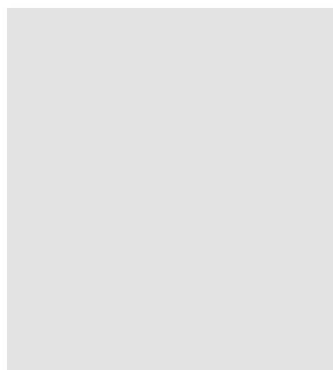


Waterloo Region Immigration

STRATEGY

2025 - 2028

| Building Community through Immigration



Immigration 2025 and Beyond

Waterloo Region has welcomed immigrants since its early beginnings. Immigrants from around the world make Waterloo Region a better community for all with their talents, passion and strengths. Everyone has a role in helping them thrive.

Since 2009, public, private and non-profit organizations have worked together through the Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership to enhance immigrant success and community prosperity.

This strategy – our sixth – reflects our ongoing commitment to both immigrants and our regional community. During its development, the world continued to grapple with the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and a new wave of economic uncertainty was unleashed following the recent American election. Immigration will continue to play a vital role in Waterloo Region's resilience, now and in the future.

We are pleased to launch Waterloo Region's Immigration Strategy 2025. It is grounded in the expertise and instinct of immigrants, partner organizations and the wider community. It sets community priorities for the next three years, guiding what we will do and accomplish. Together, we are building community through immigration. Join us.

On behalf of the Immigration Partnership:



Dr Ernest Osei
Chair



Trish Weigel-Green
Vice Chair



Tara Bedard
Executive Director

Waterloo Region, April 2025.

About Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership

Who We Are

The Immigration Partnership is a collaboration of public, private and non-profit partner organizations working together through a Leadership Council and three Steering Groups – Settle, Work, Belong – to take action to enhance immigrant success and community prosperity.

We engage with federal, provincial and other government and community initiatives to strengthen their ability to contribute immigrant success.

We are accountable to each other, our regional community and our funders.

Vision

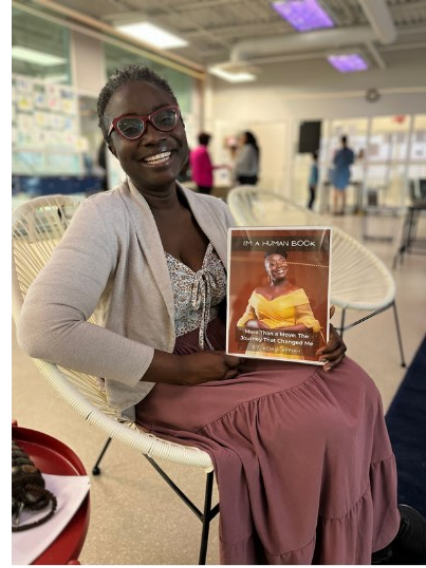
Waterloo Region is an inclusive community where immigrants thrive and contribute to shared prosperity and growth.

Mission

We equip partners and community leaders to take action to enhance immigrant success and community prosperity through research, mobilization and influence.

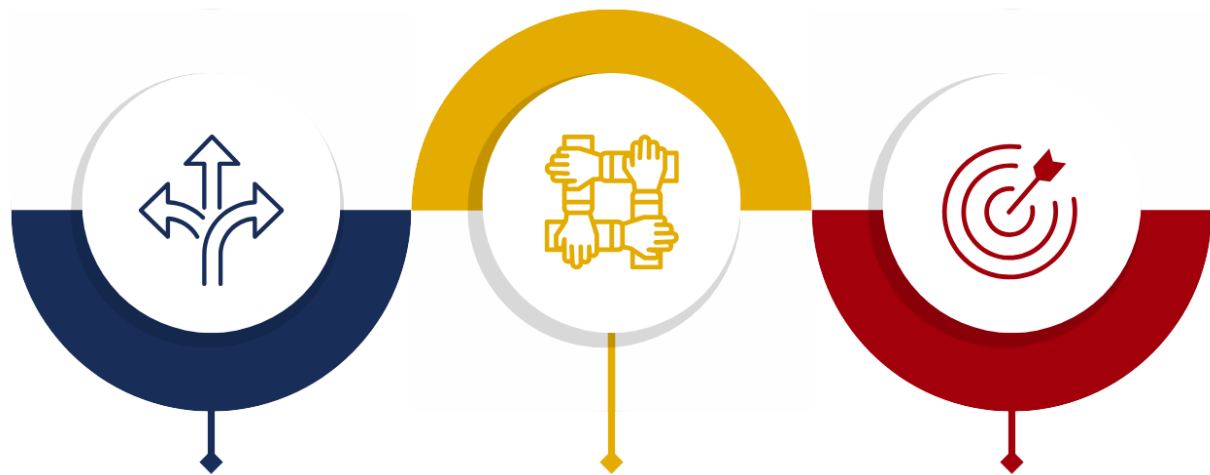
Territorial Acknowledgment

Waterloo Region is located on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee Anishnaabe and Chonnonton peoples. This land, within the Haldimand tract, is promised to the Six Nations of the Grand River, taking in six miles on each side of the Grand River. We acknowledge the enduring presence of the Indigenous people with whom we share this land, and our shared responsibility to help realise the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action.



Our Guiding Principles

We are:



RESPONSIVE

Striving to be flexible in adapting to the changing needs of immigrants and refugees through broad community consultation.

COLLABORATIVE

Working collectively in an inclusive, respectful, non-judgmental manner which follows consensus and builds on best practices and innovation while being transparent and accountable to the community.

RESULTS-ORIENTED

Taking action to efficiently achieve community-wide change to the systems and supports that impact immigrants and refugees.

We Will:

- Amplify immigrant voices
- Help everyone do their part
- Foster mutual learning and interrelatedness among immigrants and others
- Work for equity
- Tailor community actions to unique immigrant journeys





Why Immigration

Canada has a history of managed migration. It selects people from around the world to contribute to Canada’s economic success. It provides a fresh start to refugees fleeing war and persecution. It encourages family sponsorship. It welcomes many temporary residents on work and study visas.

Immigrants have helped to build prosperity for all in Canada over generations. In 2023, almost 98% of Canadian population growth came from immigration. Immigrants fill labor shortages, boost consumer spending, and create businesses. Immigrants bring new skills, ideas, and entrepreneurial spirit, contributing to innovation and economic growth and making important contributions across every sector of Canada's economy. They contribute to the tax base which supports social programs, donate to charity, volunteer and are drivers of arts and culture.

The last decade saw incredible change. We weathered a global pandemic that disrupted every aspect of economic and social life. Canada chose significant immigration growth and rapid immigration policy change to respond to regional and industry-based population and labour force challenges. Infrastructure did not keep pace with this unplanned growth. The federal government recently reversed its immigration growth path. There is national and global economic uncertainty emanating from American economic policy.

In this time of immense uncertainty, immigration remains a core element of Canadian economic policy. Intentional community-based action to support and sustain immigration success is critical.



Expected Outcomes

COUNCIL

- Partners and community leaders are taking action to enhance immigrant success and community prosperity
- The community understands the beneficial impact of and supports immigration
- Policies and systems progressively enhance immigrant and community success

SETTLE

- Services are increasingly responsive to the needs of immigrants
- Immigrants are using a range of settlement and other community services

WORK

- Employers are increasingly aware of the benefits of immigration and are successfully hiring & retaining immigrants
- Immigrants are finding appropriate and desirable work

BELONG

- Waterloo Region is increasingly welcoming
- Immigrants are connected and engaged in the community



Strategic Priorities

1. Gather insights and evidence
2. Mobilize partners and community leadership
3. Influence decision makers
4. Build organizational resilience

Goals and Objectives

1. Gather insights and evidence	
Goals	Objectives
1.1 Synthesize insights, data and research about immigration and immigrant experiences to develop a shared understanding of immigration and its ecosystem	1.1.1 Build strong partnerships to be a centre of excellence for immigration research and insights
	1.1.2 Conduct research and gather data and insights to understand the settlement ecosystem, immigration trends, experiences, gaps, opportunities, and innovations
1.2 Leverage data to identify system-wide strategies that build support for immigration and address the primary needs of immigrants	1.2.1 Share research data and insights with partners and community leaders to plan strategies for improving immigrant settlement, work and belonging
	1.2.2 Develop action-oriented tools that support immigrant integration based on current evidence and community priorities



2. Mobilize partners and community leadership

Goals	Objectives
2.1 Drive the adoption of infrastructure that improves access to information and supports for partners and immigrants	2.1.1 Leverage tools, funding and expertise to streamline information and supports for partners and immigrants
	2.1.2 Strengthen collaboration with other immigration partnerships and organizations for greater reach and efficiencies
2.2 Collaborate with partners and community leadership to make changes that improve immigrant integration	2.2.1 Facilitate data driven service coordination and enhancement decisions, and lead community response to mass arrivals and emerging events
	2.2.2 Generate engagement, learning and partnership opportunities that advance immigrant integration and foster systemic change

3. Influence decision makers

Goals	Objectives
3.1 Influence public, private and non-profit decision makers to make change and investments that improve immigrant settlement, work and belonging	3.1.1 Build relationships and provide partners with impactful connection and advocacy opportunities
	3.1.2 Advocate for organizational and system wide change and investment on shared priorities
3.2 Guide public, private and non-profit employers to actively improve immigrant settlement and employment	3.2.1 Connect partners to employers to advance shared priorities
	3.2.2 Advocate for changes that reduce immigrant employment barriers



4. Build organizational resilience

Goals	Objectives
4.1 Engage a robust, representative group of partners and staff with appropriate skills and influence	4.1.1 Identify necessary skills and networks
	4.1.2 Align recruitment and training with findings of needs assessment
4.2 Ensure organizational funding, governance and structures optimize performance	4.2.1 Regularly review governance policies and structure for effective performance
	4.2.2 Implement a long-term funding strategy that includes diversifying revenue sources



Our Partners

Council

Dr Ernest Osei (Chair), Community Member
Trish Weigel Green, (Vice Chair), Conestoga College

Tracey Hare Connell (Past Chair), The Coaching Co.

Charlene Mak, International Student Advisor Group & Wilfrid Laurier University

Ian McLean, Greater KW Chamber of Commerce

Paulina Rodriguez, City of Waterloo

Zohra Wali, City of Cambridge

Brian Kamm, United Way Waterloo Region Communities

Dauda Raji, House of Friendship

Katherine Peterson, YMCA of Three Rivers Immigrant Services

Lucia Harrison, KW Multicultural Centre

Michael Doroshenko, Community Member

Murray Gamble, The C3 Group of Companies

Peter Sweeney, Region of Waterloo, Commissioner, Community Services

Prof Jenna Hennebry, Wilfrid Laurier University, International Migration Research Centre

Conal Vaughan, Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada (*ex officio*)

Andrea Hopkins, Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (*ex officio*)

Settle

Charlene Mak (Chair), International Student Advisor Group & Wilfrid Laurier University

Debbie Engel (Vice Chair), Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health

Zeri Zigeta (Advisory Chair), Kinbridge Community Association

Alana Banton, Brittany Bridge, Kristine

Marchetti, Nikolett Agoston, Sheryl Mascoll and Vanessa Allen, Region of Waterloo

Almira Hodzic, Julie Vu, Laura Stoutenburg and Natalie Hughes, Conestoga College

Ana Luz Martinez, Brittney Emslie, Eltag

Elkhalifa and Tera Dargavel, KW Multicultural Centre

Angie Pham, Imtenan Abd-El-Razik and

Jennifer Ardon, Waterloo Region Community Legal Services

Anna Schwarz and Babur Mawladin, Reception House Waterloo Region

Asma Alwahsh, Canadian Arab Women Association KW

Ben MacBride-Smith, Michele Breault, Pauleen Payne and Sandra Kuppek, St. Louis

Adult Learning and Continuing Education Centre

Brenda Okoree, Kind Minds Family Wellness

Carolyn Beukeboom, The Centre for Family Medicine

Dauda Raji, House of Friendship

Diana Wiles, Heart of the Region

Donalee McIntyre, City of Cambridge

Duaa Al-Aghar, Muslim Social Services

Eliseo Martell, Community Member

Emily Gray, Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health

Engin Sezen and Jenna Hennebry, Wilfrid Laurier University

Faduma Musse, Somali Canadians Association of Waterloo Region (SCAWR)

Hoda Ghonim, Shore Centre

Isaiah Ritzmann, The Working Centre

Jean De Dieu Basabose, Collège Boréal

Jingling Xue, Kitchener Public Library

Lidia Gomez, English at First

Lily Adams and Marian Rozman, YMCA of Three Rivers

Linda Terry, Age Friendly Waterloo Region Network

Mayada Abou Warda, Community HealthCaring Kitchener Waterloo

Natasha Hergott, Women's Crisis Services Centre

Paula Marshall, Mennonite Central Committee Ontario

Priscilla Muzira, AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Area

Shelley Campagnola, COMPASS Refugee Centre

Siba Al-Khadour, Levant Canada

Wisam Osman, Coalition of Muslim Women



Work

Ian Mclean, Chair, Greater KW Chamber of Commerce
Sheila McIntosh, Vice-Chair, Community member
Caroline Nessner, City of Kitchener (SDG)
Charlene Hofbauer, Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington and Dufferin
Dominique Charbonneau, City of Waterloo Economic Development
Eltag Elkhalfi, KW Multicultural Centre
Isabel Vankuik, Scotiabank
Jonathan Hendel, Region of Waterloo Economic Development
Jordyn Leith, Wilfrid Laurier University
Julie Newman, Willow Hall HR
Katrina Michielsen, Conestoga College
Laura Pearce, City of Cambridge Economic Development
Lily Magnus, Kinbridge Community Association
Michael Doroshenko, Community member
Mohamed Bille Hassan, Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health
Natalie Cooper, Region of Waterloo Employment Services
Roberto Villamar, Community member
Sue Benoit, YourH2R
Swati Sharma, YMCA of Three Rivers
Tamin Hamidi, Serco

Belong

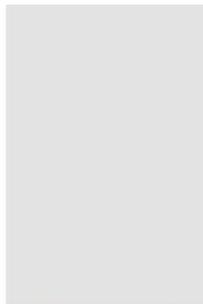
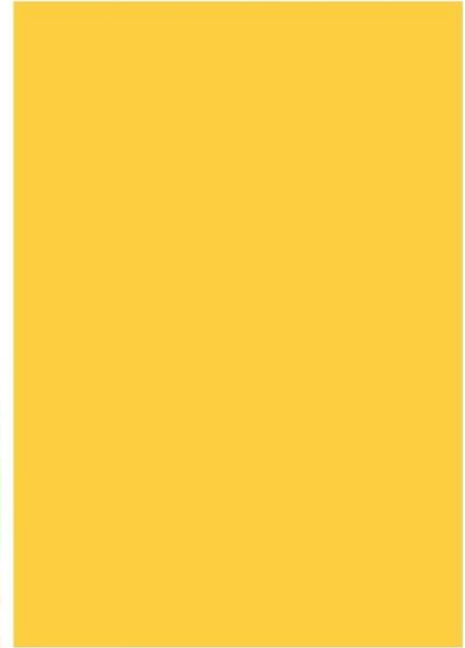
Paulina Rodriguez (Co-Vice Chair), City of Waterloo
Zohra Wali (Co-Vice Chair), City of Cambridge
Ana Lagos and Brittney Emslie, KW Multicultural Centre
Abby Cooper, Hearts Open for Everyone
Ali Aminaei Chatroudi, Jennifer Sullivan, Marina Dotzert and Mary Dowhaniuk, City of Kitchener

Alex Allen, Hospice WR
Anna Schwarz, Babur Mawladin and Pari Karem, Reception House Waterloo Region
Aoussaf Arrout and Marwa Gebeil, Kinbridge Community Centre
Arcy Canumay, Sustainable WR Travel Wise
Asma AlWahsh, Canadian Arab Women's Association
Cameron Tai and Emily Vincent, Volunteer WR
Cheryl Faria, Nikolett Agoston and Sheryl Mascoll, Region of Waterloo Children's Services
Cheryl Grove, Julia Nosova and Umi Mohammed, Region of Waterloo
Corie Schweertman, Conestoga College
Emily Jaarsma, Greenway-Chaplin Community Centre
Fadhilah Balogun, CCORIC member, African Women Alliance of Waterloo Region
Fauzia Wafai, Kokui Appiah and Mifrah Abid, Community members
Fidelia Ukueje, Nigerians in the Region of Waterloo (NIROW) and Region of Waterloo
Julia Gingrich, Waterloo Public Libraries
Kathilee Porter, ELLA
Lisa Leachman, Cambridge Food Bank
Lisset Jacinto, YMCA of Three Rivers – Cambridge
Marie-Pierre Daoust, Conseil Scolaire Catholique Mon Avenir
Ravit Lechter, Waterloo Region Jewish Community Council
Rihanat El-Alawa, Waterloo Region District School Board
Saifullah Muhammad, Rohingya Centre
Sarah Shafiq, Coalition of Muslim Women Kitchener – Waterloo
Shannon Markle, Cambridge Public Libraries
Teena Paul, Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health





Waterloo Region Immigration **STRATEGY** 2025 - 2028



Building Community through Immigration

For more information:

Email: immigrationpartnership@regionofwaterloo.ca

99 Regina Street South, Waterloo, Ontario, N2J4P9

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<https://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca>



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