

Introduction

Historically, nation building in Canada has meant increased immigration, and that is what we are experiencing again.

- ❖ Today, labour market requirements are drivers for this most recent effort. Impending imperative: we must get immigration right because by 2031 in Canada and earlier in rural areas, is when natural population will be trumped by immigration.
- ❖ The geography of immigration is shifting from China and India, and now the Philippines are top of the list for immigrants. With English proficiency and high education levels, they are a fit in urban and rural Canada alike.
- ❖ The rural challenges are also based on labour shortages, coupled with demographic challenges of aging, declining populations, and fewer youth.
- ❖ Rural Manitoba is one such area responding to such challenges of a welcoming community.
- ❖ This poster focuses on research that assists rural centres to respond to housing issues and labour market shortage with temporary foreign workers.

Immigrant Housing Strategy

Research Objectives

Examine immigration settlement patterns in rural MB. Propose housing strategy to guide actions and investments in rural communities.

Methods

- Determine and categorize differences in settlement pattern of immigrants in rural MB based on existing sources
- Define rural housing stakeholder groups and roles
- Identify strategies and illustrate recent rural housing responses
- State future housing research

Limitations and Considerations

- Housing market of supply and demand is dysfunctional in some rural areas
- Housing issues are complex in rural areas requiring multiple housing options

Findings

- Increasing numbers of immigrants moving to rural communities
- Immigrants require affordable but not necessarily low income housing
- Housing units in rural communities are not always appropriate for immigrant households
- Housing market is tight, vacancy rates low and affordable homes scarce in many rural communities
- Demand for housing is best examined at regional level
- Housing strategies need to vary by centre size
- All centres should assess housing needs and develop a strategy
- Larger centres housing strategies: more lots, add new rental units, more affordable units, renovate stock
- Small centre housing strategies: renovate stock, add accessory suites, convert non-residential to residential
- A 7-step pathway for developing housing strategy (see *Immigrant Housing Assessment Process* graphic below)

Future Housing Strategy Research

- Explore types of housing favoured most by recent arrivals of immigrant workers and identify any particular trends after reunited with family
- Identify the challenges and barriers to housing development with municipal representatives and business owners
- Evolve assessment process into housing information pathway for rural regions



Immigrant Housing Assessment Process



Too Many Derelict Houses – houses such as these take up space in many communities and some even are occupied by immigrants resulting in very poor housing conditions



Lack of Primary rental – most communities have very few if any primary rental options such as those pictured above. Primary rental include purpose built options with three or more units



Quality of Mobile Homes – mobile homes are an attractive option (top picture) for immigrants but can often be of poor quality (bottom picture)

Temporary Foreign Worker Strategy

Research Objectives

Guide for SME to hire staff. Assist rural business people in satisfying their labour market needs by providing an information pathway to hiring TFWs.

Methods

- Identify key stakeholders and related requirements for hiring TFW
- Discuss sequence of steps with employers and govt agencies
- Develop an overall pathway describing stakeholders, information requirements of an employer and TFW, and timeline: Validate pathway with stakeholders
- State future research

Limitations and Considerations

- Pathways for hiring TFW may differ from those required by other immigration pathways

Findings

Hiring

- TFWs are not usually employer's first choice. Canadian workers difficult to attract/retain
- TFW hiring process very onerous and frustrating—difficult for small business owners
- Labour market opinion (LMO) process slow and challenging to meet all criteria in small rural towns i.e. advertising & wage rates
- Establishing networks through existing TFWs makes the hiring process much easier but can be difficult at the start
- Motivations of TFWs important; consider experience of living away from home, comfort with rural living, and dedication to work

Settlement

- Language barriers can be difficult
- Initial transition can be hard for TFWs, employers, and staff
- Settling TFWs an important process employers undertook willingly
- Housing is a challenge in many communities
- Community support and services for TFWs is important in assisting new arrivals and employers
- A 7-step process is required to hire TFWs by SMEs (see *Rural Employers Information Pathway for Hiring TFWs in Manitoba* graphic right)

Benefits of TFWs

- Provides employees when Canadian workers are unavailable or unreliable
- TFWs are appreciative of having a job and are reliable and eager to improve & impress
- TFW initiative provides workers and family with an opportunity for a new life

Future TFW Strategy Research

- Review TFW application process for small/rural businesses and provide recommendations for improving process
- Create another pathway focusing on the settlement of TFWs and specific steps to create welcoming communities
- Develop community case studies that create gap analysis of local worker needs and shortages and create recommendations for TFW hiring in those communities

Rural Employers Information Pathway for Hiring TFWs in Manitoba



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