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Portage la Prairie Socio-economic Analysis

Immigration Readiness Assessment

December 2025



A collaboration between:



Portage la Prairie
Community
Revitalization
Corporation

Introduction

An immigration readiness assessment was completed for the Region of Portage la Prairie. This review is designed to establish a baseline of the region's immigrant attraction capabilities and to understand the existing processes and capacity surrounding the local immigration support ecosystem. This analysis should be used as a tool to help the Region of Portage la Prairie and its immigration support ecosystem along its continuous improvement journey. Portage Regional Economic Development (PRED) is responsible for leading an update of this Immigration Readiness Assessment on a yearly basis.

Portage Regional Economic Development (PRED) will lead annual updates of this assessment. As part of its mandate, PRED provides data on issues that impact the local economy, enabling decision-makers, organizations, and communities to develop informed, effective solutions. Immigration readiness, defined as the region's ability to attract and retain newcomers, is a critical factor in workforce development and business attraction.

This document is not a strategic plan or a set of recommended initiatives. Instead, it offers a measurable snapshot of data as of 2025, answering the question: *How immigration-ready is the Region of Portage la Prairie?*

Advancing immigration readiness is a shared responsibility. It requires collaboration among municipalities, governments, and community organizations. While municipalities and other levels of government may lobby on policy issues, PRED measures progress, and the Portage la Prairie Local Immigration Partnership (PLIP) works to ensure the region remains welcoming. Success depends on these efforts moving forward in tandem.

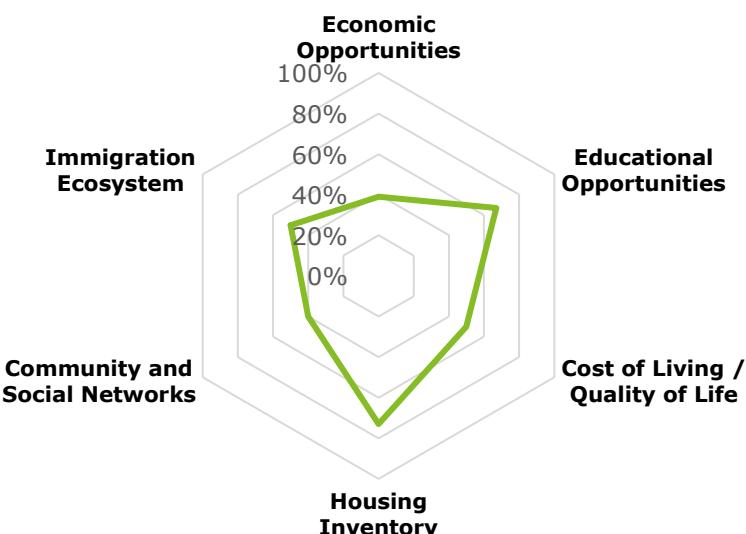
Background and links to other plans:

This assessment aligns with PRED's [10-year Regional Economic Development Strategy](#) released in 2023. Specifically, it fulfills KPI 2.4 – *Inclusive Communities: Complete an Immigration Readiness Assessment*. Immigration readiness is directly linked to workforce development and business attraction, making this initiative vital to the region's economic, social, and cultural growth.

"The Immigration Readiness Assessment is a pivotal strategic initiative aimed at enhancing the economic, social, and cultural fabric for the Region of Portage la Prairie. As a forward-thinking community, The Region of Portage la Prairie recognizes the importance of welcoming newcomers to the region and ensuring their successful integration. This comprehensive assessment should be led by PRED as immigration is directly related to both workforce development and business attraction. The assessment is designed to evaluate the Region's readiness to effectively embrace and support immigrants, fostering a more vibrant and diverse community."

Immigration Readiness Assessment Overview

The immigration readiness assessment reviews six themes related to immigration readiness which include economic opportunities, educational opportunities, cost of living/quality of life, housing inventory, community and social networks, and immigration ecosystem. The framework is meant to be scalable, depending on the size and intricacy of the local ecosystem. This assessment was completed in three phases. The initial phased included a desktop review and stakeholder focus group. The Deloitte project team reviewed the regional materials and online publications related to immigration support and engaged with local immigration support organizations and immigrants to understand the current landscape. The second phase included a review from PRED and Portage la Prairie Local Immigration Partnership to address gaps. The third phase was a final revision process by the project team that brings together all the information from relevant project partners. Scores were given to each section of the review based on the level of priority of each topic and the service level within the Region of Portage la Prairie.



Immigration Outlook

The historical immigration trends in the Region of Portage la Prairie show a gradual increase in immigrant settlement, with notable developments in recent years. Between 2016 and 2021, the immigrant population grew from 5.7% to 8.0%. From 2018 to 2022, 675 new permanent residents settled in the region, with a significant rise in admissions reaching 270 in 2022. The Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program has been instrumental in attracting skilled workers to the region, with 231 nominations between 2021 and 2023. The local immigrant population is diverse, with 37% from the Philippines and 32.4% from India.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada released a forward-looking snapshot of national immigration targets over the next three years. This plan identifies that permanent resident targets in Canada will reduce by 105,000 in 2025 with further reductions in 2026 and 2027. Over 40% of new permanent residents are expected to be individuals in Canada already as temporary residents. In terms of temporary residents, Canada will reduce the number to 5% of the country's population by the end of 2026.¹ The Region of Portage la

¹ 2025-2027 Immigration Levels Plan

Prairie should expect to see overall declines in line with the most recent Immigration Levels Plan. The overall decline in immigration across Canada could increase competition among communities when attract new skilled immigrants to meet labour shortages.

Key Findings

The Region of Portage la Prairie scored 55% in terms of overall immigration readiness. Evaluations for sections related to Housing Inventory scored well (73%), as did Educational Opportunities (67%). Community and Social Networks and Economic Opportunities had low scores at 40% and 39% respectively, indicating that there is room for improvement in these areas.

Economic Opportunities

Economic Opportunities	Status	Notes
1. Are there open positions within the community that are desirable across a variety of skill level requirements, occupations, and industries?	Needs Improvement	<p>There are open positions within the region, however, they are not all accessible to newcomers due to credential recognition issues or institutionalized racism.</p> <p>Socio-cultural elements like credential recognition and institutionalized racism are often qualitative and are based on lived experiences, which creates challenges to measure them objectively. They have been included in this analysis as a way to highlight systemic barriers that stakeholders feel impact the community, even if they fall outside community control.</p>
2. Is there an accessible online directory of job postings within Portage la Prairie? Is there an online directory of local employers?	No	There is no online directory available.
3. Does the Region of Portage la Prairie provide information and updates to local employers on topics including, online recruitment tools and platforms, community promotional materials, experiential education programs, internation student employment and recruitment, DEI training, and cultural sensitivity and mentoring programs?	Needs Improvement	Information is provided to employers in an ad-hoc manner. There are opportunities to formalize information sharing between the region and businesses.
4. Are local employers engaged in the community immigrant attraction efforts?	Needs Improvement	Some employers are engaged, but through informal methods such as attracting immigrants through family and friends who have shown to be valuable employees.

Educational Opportunities

Educational Opportunities	Status	Notes
1. Is there capacity in local primary and secondary schools for immigrants?	Needs Improvement	While statistics provided indicate there is capacity, educators have shared that physical space is limited in schools since there are new programs being introduced that take up classrooms which limit where children can learn.
2. Is there a plan in place to support English language training within schools?	Yes	
3. Are primary educators prepared/trained to support and understand newcomer's experiences, challenges, and strengths?	Yes	Educators are prepared to support challenges of newcomers and enhance their strengths.
4. Are there post-secondary programs with available spots for newcomers for in-demand occupations?	Needs Improvement	There are challenges in attracting sufficient number of instructors to support new classes.
5. Are there certification/recertification or upskilling programs available?	Needs Improvement	There are programs to help recertify nurses and health care professions, but this has not been replicated across a variety of certifications due to its complexity. There are some exceptions made on a case-by-case basis but is time consuming and increases friction to employment.
6. Are local PSIs actively recruiting international students? Do the institutions offer a range of experiential opportunities with local employers?	Needs Improvement	While there is some recruitment, ensuring that there is enough staff to support the increase in students is critical for local post-secondaries.

Cost of Living / Quality of Life

Cost of Living / Quality of Life	Status	Notes
1. Does the Region of Portage la Prairie have available, accessible and suitable health care for newcomers?	Needs Improvement	There is a shortage of healthcare workers in the region. Some services are not available in the region and travel to Winnipeg is required.
2. Does the Region of Portage la Prairie have information readily available to educate newcomers about the local health care system (e.g. how to find a family physician, use emergency care, etc.)?	Needs Improvement	There are descriptions of local health organizations available on the PCRC webpage. Creating a one-page guide that can be shared with newcomers will support access to healthcare.
3. Is the average rent in Portage la Prairie at or below the provincial average?	Needs improvement	There are many rentals in the region that meet this criteria, however high rents are prevalent, and there is a shortage of rental units with multi-month wait lists for moving in. New rental units are currently in development in the City of Portage la Prairie and will help to alleviate wait lists.
4. Is the average home cost in Portage la Prairie below the provincial average? Are property taxes on dwellings below the provincial averages?	Needs Improvement	Average home prices in Portage la Prairie are lower than the provincial average.
5. Is the median salary in Portage la Prairie above the provincial median?	Needs Improvement	Wages in the region are lower than in the province broadly, however, a lower cost of living is also present.
6. Are there sufficient recreation opportunities for newcomers across different cultural groups?	Yes	Newcomers spoke highly of the recreation opportunities in the region.
7. Does the Region of Portage la Prairie offer support for transportation around the region to newcomers?	No	Transit options are expected to be implemented in the medium-term but are not currently offered for newcomers or residents.

Housing Inventory

Housing Inventory	Status	Notes
1. Does the Region of Portage la Prairie have a standalone housing strategy to ensure sufficient quantity and variety of housing to meet expected future demand? Does the strategy identify the number of new, and types of attainable housing desired for the region?	Yes	The housing strategy was prepared in 2023 and has a horizon to 2041. Updates should be made to this strategy on a regular basis.
2. Does the Region of Portage la Prairie have planning policies and inclusionary zoning to support the construction of additional dwelling units and support increased housing density?	Yes	The Portage la Prairie Planning District's Development Plan indicates that residential growth should primarily occur in the downtown area of the City of Portage la Prairie and to encourage a range of living opportunities and affordability levels across the district.
3. Does the Region of Portage la Prairie have incentive programs through Community Improvement Plans, or other strategies to support affordable/attainable housing?	Yes	The City of Portage la Prairie has an infill development rebate to support housing density in the city and stimulate development on underutilized lots.
4. Does the Region of Portage la Prairie track data on land inventory and affordable housing units to measure and report on available unit construction?	Needs Improvement	
5. Does the Region of Portage la Prairie support partnerships and programs with housing non-profits?	Yes	
6. Are there available rental units for newcomers, or existing construction projects that will increase the number of units in the near-term?	Needs Improvement	There are 400 upcoming rental units that are near completion, however, there are currently multi-month wait times for rentals. Beyond the near-term completions, it is unclear what other construction projects are underway to increase the number of rental units.
7. Is there a sufficient number of homes available for sale to meet the housing demand from newcomers?	No	While there are homes for sale, for a growing population, there are not sufficient numbers of housing that are for sale at an affordable value for newcomers.

Community and Social Networks

Community and Social Networks	Status	Notes
1. Is there a directory of resident service providers, community organizations, community groups, health and education contacts, and immigration settlement services available publicly?	Yes	PCRC hosts a directory of service providers across the region. It will be important to keep this directory up to date as organizations shift. Ensuring that this directory is available in multiple languages can further support newcomers.
2. Are there plans in place that enable and encourage newcomers to take part in community activities such as sport leagues or arts programs?	Needs Improvement	There are programs in place where newcomers participate in community activities. However, there are no plans or strategies designed to support participation.
3. Are local community programs offered in multiple languages?	Needs Improvement	There are some programs offered in multiple languages. This is not consistent throughout the region.
4. Is there a volunteer program to connect newcomers with local residents?	No	There is no current programming to connect newcomers to local residents.
5. Is there a community plan to ensure that public safety organizations such as law enforcement, fire services, and health services are sensitive to the needs of newcomers (Language, cultural context, etc.)?	No	

Immigration Ecosystem

Immigration Ecosystem	Status	Notes
1. Does the Region of Portage la Prairie have a standalone immigration attraction strategy?	Needs Improvement	The Portage la Prairie Local Immigration Partnership has an action plan for 2020-2025 that is designed to support outcomes for immigrants to the community. The action plan does not have actions to support immigrant attraction.
2. Does the Region of Portage la Prairie have a dedicated community, regional, rural, federal or provincial stream or program dedicated to immigration attraction?	No	There is no dedicated community, regional, rural, federal or provincial program for immigrant attraction.
3. Does the Region of Portage la Prairie's economic development or corporate strategic plan incorporate immigration readiness?	Yes	PRED's economic development strategy has an underlying focus on inclusiveness that will support economic opportunities for the region. The City of Portage la Prairie's corporate strategy has a focus on improving the quality of life and creating an inclusive and informed community. While neither strategy directly calls out immigration, both strategies focus on areas that are critical for immigration readiness.
4. Does the Region of Portage la Prairie have a designated contact for immigrant attraction? Is this person familiar with community amenities, relevant support programs, and community services?	No	There is no dedicated contact for immigrant attraction.

Immigration Ecosystem	Status	Notes
5. Does the Region of Portage la Prairie have an online landing page for individuals and families that are considering a move to the region? Is the community proactively marketed to potential immigrants?	Needs Improvement	The Portage la Prairie Local Immigration Partnership's website (immigratetoportage.com) is designed to be the landing page for immigrants. However, it has low search engine optimization and is not a top search result. Improvements such as introductory text and language translation will support knowledge sharing for newcomers.
6. Does the Region of Portage la Prairie engage with newcomers to provide feedback on existing immigration efforts and communication tools?	Yes	The Local Immigration Partnership consistently communicates with newcomers to discuss how the community can improve to support immigration outcomes.
7. Does the Region of Portage la Prairie engage with Provincial and Federal politicians, departments and agencies on issues related to workforce demand, population growth, and immigration?	Needs Improvement	The region does communicate with Provincial and Federal agencies; however, additional advocacy is needed to support outcomes in the region.



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This assessment has been provided for the purpose of informing and assisting Portage la Prairie Economic Development to develop a Socio-economic Analysis that supports immigration into the region.

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