

From Talk to Action: Building a Diverse Workforce

Partners:





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PARTNERSHIP

Halifax Region Immigration Strategy

**From Talk to Action: Building a Diverse
Workforce**

December 6, 2005





Halifax Region Immigration Strategy

Greater Halifax Partnership

- **Economic growth organization for HRM**
- **Public-private partnership**
- **130 private and public sector investors**
 - Local, regional, national and international
- **All 3 levels of government**
 - Municipal, provincial, and federal

Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association

- **Leading immigrant service provider in the Atlantic region, now in its 25th year**
- **25 staff work on settlement, employment, business orientation, family support**
- **Over 1,000 clients per year, from all immigration categories**



Questions

- **How many of you are exporting today?**
- **How many have plans to export?**
- **How many have outsourced parts of your business to off shore companies?**
- **How many are thinking about it?**
- **How many think immigrants could enhance your business, particularly if you responded positively to one of the previous questions?**



Demographic Challenge

- **The population of Nova Scotia is barely growing and in two recent years has actually declined (Source: Statistics Canada).**
- **Within 20 years, current projections indicate that over 40 per cent of Nova Scotia's population will be age 55 or older (source: Atlantic Provinces Economic Council).**
- **HRM could soon face a shrinking workforce, a smaller business-economic base and a declining tax base.**
- **Immigration is one of the means to increase population, grow the labour force and alleviate skill shortages.**



Benefits of Immigration

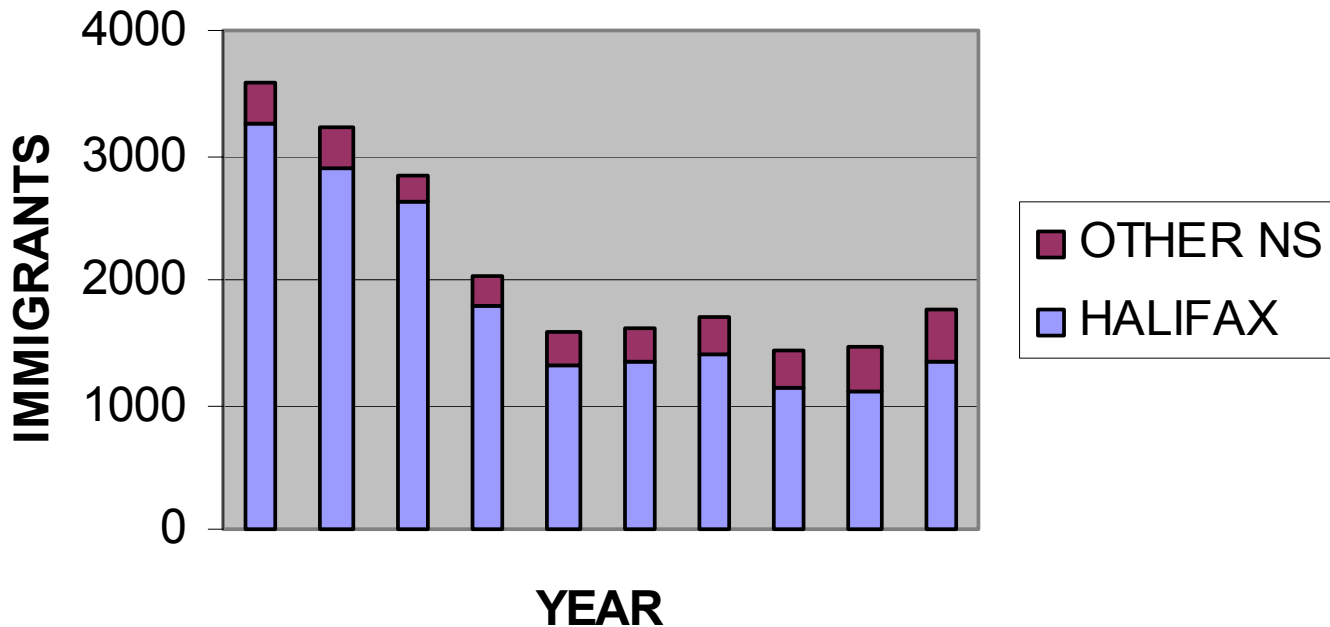
- **Increase levels of entrepreneurship**
- **Develop a source of investment capital**
- **Increase exports**
- **Increase diversity in our community**





Immigration to Nova Scotia is Rebounding

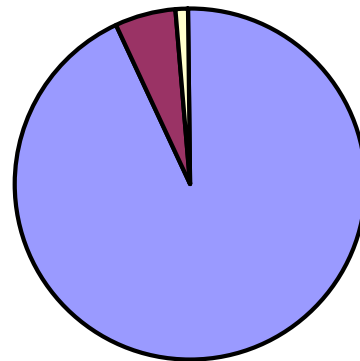
**IMMIGRATION TO NOVA SCOTIA
1995-2004**





Recent Immigrants to Halifax have not stayed

HALIFAX 2001 IMMIGRANTS IN POPULATION

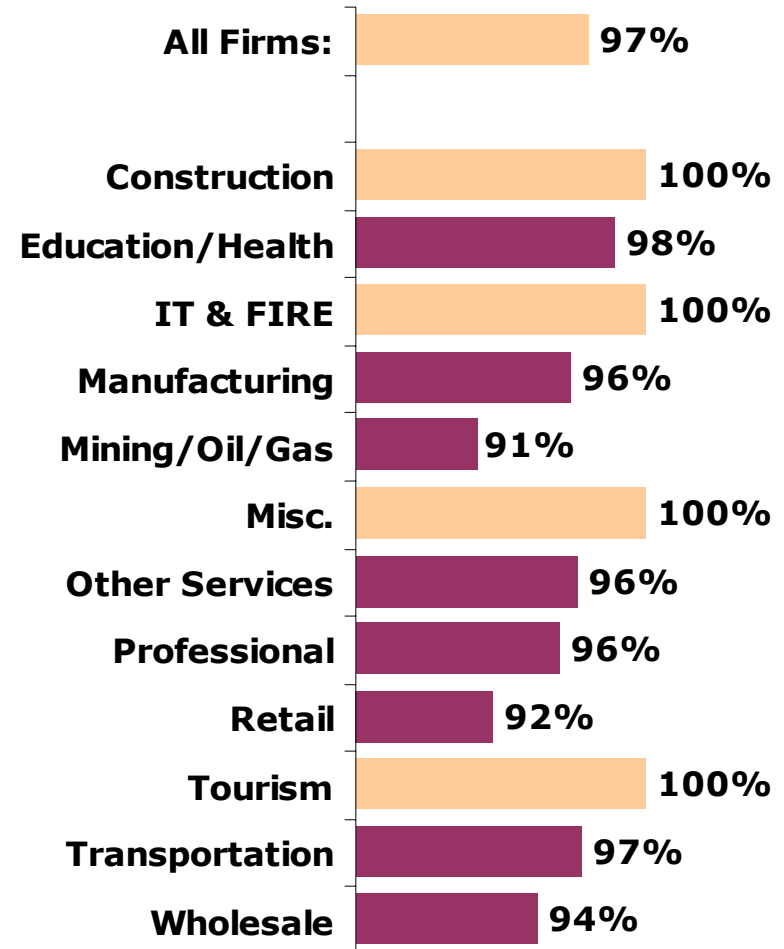


7%



SmartBusiness Data: Immigrant Workforce

- Virtually all firms are willing to hire immigrants to fill open positions – 97%.
- Only 27 out of 830 companies indicated an unwillingness to hire immigrants.
- There was essentially no major variance in opinion among industries or by employment size or headquarters.
- The main barriers to hiring immigrants were considered to be:
 - Language
 - Cultural differences
 - Professional qualifications recognition
 - Incremental training time





Halifax Region Immigration Strategy

Consultation Process:

- **More than 70 organizations involved in immigration in HRM**
- **Over 100 stakeholder consultations:**
 - Immigrants
 - International students
 - Settlement organizations
 - Economic development organizations
 - Employer, trade and labour
 - Universities and colleges
 - All 3 levels of government



Halifax Region Immigration Strategy

Stakeholder Suggestions:

- **Building on existing ethnic and religious communities**
- **Retain international students**
- **Engage employers and business community**
- **Undertake public-focused communications**
- **Create a welcoming community and carry out activities around attraction and marketing**



Halifax Region Immigration Strategy

- The three key foundation elements of the strategy are:
 - **First** – to build on the foundation elements of Federal legislation and Nova Scotia's Immigration Strategy;
 - **Second** – To more fully integrate immigrants already living in HRM, so they remain and provide opportunities for future growth;
 - **Third** – to attract immigrants likely to stay in HRM because they have the ability to build sustainable employment, business, professional, cultural, and community relationships.



Halifax Region Immigration Strategy

Immigration fuels growth

Partnership launches plan to attract more foreign citizens

By CLARE MELLOR
Business Reporter

Binoj Daivashayam of India chose Halifax because of its lack of immigrants.

With a commerce degree and an MBA, the 34-year-old originally planned to settle in Toronto but saw opportunity during a visit to Halifax.

"I came here to visit (a friend) and saw the place, and there were no immigrants here. I thought, 'Places like Toronto are saturated with immigrants,'" said Mr. Daivashayam, who is from Kerala, India.

"There would be less competition. In Toronto, (employers) would have five people (applying for a job) who know three languages like I do," he said Wednesday following a business luncheon in Halifax organized by the Greater Halifax Partnership.

Mr. Daivashayam, who moved to Canada in February 2004, now works at the Royal Bank in Halifax as a personal financial representative, assisting customers with mutual funds, accounts and loans. His eventual goal is to be an investment banker.

On a volunteer basis, he also helps newcomers to this country navigate Canada's banking system.

While Mr. Daivashayam saw Halifax's lack of immigrants as an opportunity, the small number is something government and many business organizations and leaders are desperate to change.

"Only seven per cent of Greater Halifax's Partnership is foreign-born. That number has to change." Stephen Dempsey, president and chief executive officer of the Greater Halifax



Gordon Nixon, RBC Financial Group CEO, speaks about the economic benefits of immigration during a Greater Halifax Partnership luncheon in Halifax on Wednesday. (PETER PARSONS / Staff)

Launched at Building Our Future Event, Featuring Gordon M. Nixon, President and CEO RBC Financial Group

Unanimously Endorsed By HRM Council



Halifax Region Immigration Strategy

Targets:

- **Over the next five years**
 - 2,800 immigrants arriving annually
 - 70% retention rate
- **\$366 million cumulative direct economic impact**



Halifax Region Immigration Strategy

Two Key Actions:

- **Formation of the Halifax Region Immigration Leadership Council.**
 - The Leadership Council will determine the scope and timing of various elements of the implementation plan and the budget associated with such activities.
 - Preliminary list has been developed, formal invitations will be sent shortly – first meeting early 2006
- **The development of a business outreach program and print-based awareness campaign**
 - We're here today
 - Meeting with Consuls/Honourary Consuls on December 16
 - Print campaign – under development. In market early 2006



We need to focus on **RETAINING** immigrants

- **Facilitating economic integration**
- **Building community awareness & engagement**
- **Providing customized, flexible, practical support services for newcomers**

Retention will increase attraction:

- **Strong community word-of-mouth**
- **More established ethnic groups**
- **More pathways, mentors**



Examples

- **Work placement:** a foot in the door in government, in professions such as pharmacy
- **Business orientation:** saving time and money
- **English in the workplace:** focused tutorials on the job



Canadian Lebanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry Nova Scotia

- **Work to promote cultural and economic exchange between Canada and Lebanon**
- **Help Lebanese interests in Canada and Canadian interests in Lebanon**
- **An important resource for our business community**
 - Business information
 - Sources and leads
 - Events
- **Driven by partnerships, opens doors**



Final Thoughts

- **A welcoming community is important.**
- **A welcoming workplace is even more important.**





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Halifax Region Immigration Strategy

**Business Outreach Event
December 6, 2005**



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Partners:



Roundtable Questions

- **Question 1**

- If a welcoming business community is our goal, what steps do we need to take to get there? How do we open our business networks?

- **Question 2**

- Do our recruitment and hiring practices ensure we find the best people to help us strengthen / grow our businesses? What can we do differently as a company and as a business community to ensure we attract the best and the brightest?