

CAPE BRETON LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

# Community Consultation on Newcomer Settlement in Cape Breton-Unama'ki



**FINAL REPORT**  
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All individuals featured in photographs in this report are – or have been – newcomers to Cape Breton-Unama'ki. They've come from around the world to settle throughout the island, making it a richer and more diverse place to live, work, study and explore.

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# Executive Summary

## Purpose of Consultation

This report presents the findings of the Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP) community consultation held in 2021. The consultation was conducted to better understand current challenges in newcomer settlement and the opportunities for improved outcomes and to share this understanding with community partners in order to help inform their ongoing work to support newcomers. The consultation took place during January and February of 2021.

## Overview

The CBLIP was launched in 2017 to build a collaborative approach to improving newcomer settlement outcomes in Cape Breton-Unama'ki. Led by an advisory council of 30 member organizations, the CBLIP has current focus on four key priority areas: fostering welcoming communities, raising public awareness, improving coordination and supporting community-based research and planning. To support the latter priority, the CBLIP commits to biennial community consultations to better understand community trends and priorities related to immigration and settlement.

The current consultation process was adapted for the COVID-19 context and included data collection via two surveys (one for newcomers and one for other, established community members), two focus group discussions and two additional interviews with community members. Surveys and discussions were hosted online, with options offered for paper-based or telephone participation. Promotion for participation took place through a variety of channels, including: radio, newspaper, social media and targeted email invitation.

In total, 111 newcomer surveys and 197 community surveys were analyzed for this report. Six newcomers and two other community members participated in the in-depth focus group and interview processes.

## Findings

The consultation focused on two main questions:

**What are the challenges for newcomers settling in Cape Breton-Unama'ki?**

**What are the opportunities to improve the settlement experience?**



When asked about their most significant challenges in settling, **51 per cent** included finding or maintaining work in their response. The next most common challenges, each identified by **35 per cent** of respondents, were making friends and maintaining healthy relationships and finding affordable housing.

Overall, the satisfaction of newcomers with services available in Cape Breton-Unama'ki was relatively high, though many areas for improvement were described. Lower satisfaction was found with health and wellness-related services, with only **68 per cent** providing a positive rating. In contrast, **86 per cent** of newcomers who had used settlement and language services gave a positive rating regarding their experience.

When asked what had helped them the most while settling in, the top five answers offered by newcomers were, in order: making friends, exploring the Island, finding work, having family support and connection with others with shared background or language.

The vast majority of participants in community surveys and interviews had extremely positive perceptions of the value of newcomers in Cape Breton-Unama'ki and shared extensive and detailed feedback regarding specific actions that they believe individuals, organizations and communities can take to foster more welcoming communities. Common suggestions were related to: improving access to information, offering more multicultural events and celebrations and enhancing social connectivity.

Respondents to both the newcomer and community surveys ranked increased access to affordable housing as the most important change needed to support newcomer settlement. Community members felt that improvements to social connection and cultural events were the next most important, while newcomers prioritized employment supports and employer education regarding the value of hiring newcomers.

## Opportunities for Improvement

The consultation identified several areas of opportunity to improve newcomer settlement outcomes in Cape Breton-Unama'ki.

### 1. Finding and implementing solutions to newcomer housing challenges

While **72 per cent** of newcomer respondents said they were satisfied with their accommodation, improved access to affordable housing was the top-ranked area of change needed identified in both surveys. International students and recent immigrants had lower than average levels of satisfaction and respondents shared the challenges involved in moving between short-term rentals while looking for permanent housing.

The impact of the housing challenge on both attracting and retaining newcomers in Cape Breton-Unama'ki is extremely significant and requires ongoing collaboration between a wide variety of actors in both the private and public sectors. Exploration of best practices, across Canada and beyond, regarding housing solutions for newcomers, particularly in rural and smaller centres, will be helpful in the ongoing identification and implementation of creative solutions.

### 2. Expanding resources to help newcomers find and maintain employment

While not the sole factor that determines newcomer retention in a community, securing meaningful employment is a critical determinant regarding a decision to stay in Cape Breton-Unama'ki. More than half of newcomer respondents had experienced challenges in finding or maintaining employment since arrival. Nearly half of all respondents were working but were actively looking to change or improve their current job.

The majority of respondents had post-secondary education but, if they were working, most were doing so outside of their chosen field.

Ongoing and expanded efforts to provide tailored support to newcomers in terms of job searching, career advice, network building and skills training are imperative. Awareness raising regarding the labour market in Cape Breton-Unama'ki and targeted approaches to match newcomers and employers will continue to be essential moving forward. Finally, employers need additional support and resources to take action to foster more welcoming and inclusive hiring practices and workplaces.

### 3. Improving communication regarding newcomer services

While overall satisfaction with available services for newcomers was relatively high among survey respondents, there was a lack of awareness of services across several categories. Of particular note were settlement and language services, which only **7 per cent** of survey respondents had used. This indicates that many newcomers may not be benefitting from the full suite of supports that are available to them. During focus group discussions, participants repeatedly raised challenges around knowing where to find information - or even what information they should be looking for.



Ongoing efforts to improve communication regarding available services are necessary. Information needs to be relevant, up-to-date, comprehensive and easy to find and navigate. The development of an online information hub for newcomers at [welcometocapebreton.ca](http://welcometocapebreton.ca) is one initiative to help address this challenge. Enhancements to interagency coordination of services are also critical to improving the settlement experience. Additional training for volunteers in the Cape Breton Welcome Network regarding where to direct newcomers to find the services they need and the development and distribution of hardcopy directories to complement online resources will help disseminate information further.

### 4. Engaging communities and celebrating diversity

Community members clearly indicated a desire to connect more with newcomers. Many were not yet aware of the Cape Breton Welcome Network and the structure it provides to connect local volunteers with newcomers. Ongoing communication and raising awareness regarding the Network are necessary. The results of this report will be shared with the Welcome Network to help generate additional activity ideas for volunteers.

Ongoing collaboration with municipal units, businesses and other organizations will also be necessary to share ideas regarding actions that can be taken to improve newcomer experiences - and resources that can help facilitate those actions.

Many respondents also expressed a desire to see more learning opportunities around cultural diversity and more community events and celebrations of multiculturalism. These celebrations can take a variety of forms, from small daily actions to large-scale events. Sharing ideas like those included in this report and developing resources to assist in community education and celebration should be ongoing efforts.

### 5. Committing to ongoing anti-discrimination work

Nearly half of newcomer respondents had experienced some form of discrimination since arriving in Cape Breton-Unama'ki. Most often, this discrimination was associated with ethnicity, culture, race or skin colour. **67 per cent** of community respondents said that they had witnessed discrimination in the community. Most commonly, reported discrimination took place in a store, bank, or restaurant. Systemic change is required. Ongoing training, education and action is needed at individual and organizational levels to combat discrimination in all of its forms.



# Introduction

The Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP) is a collaborative, community initiative designed to foster welcoming and inclusive communities for newcomers in Cape Breton-Unama'ki. The CBLIP was established in 2017 as an initiative of the Cape Breton Partnership, Cape Breton-Unama'ki's private sector-led economic development organization. The Cape Breton Partnership recognizes that immigration will continue to play a key role in the economic future of Cape Breton. To better support settlement outcomes for newcomers, the Cape Breton Partnership is pleased to administer and support the CBLIP.

As described in its Strategic Plan (2019-2022), one of the key priorities of the CBLIP is to support community-level research and planning. To this end, the CBLIP has committed to ongoing consultation with newcomers and with the community at large to best understand current gaps and opportunities with relation to newcomer settlement in Cape Breton-Unama'ki. On a bi-annual basis, the CBLIP conducts surveys and community conversations, analyzes the data collected, and shares the results with participants, partners, and the community.

The CBLIP is pleased to present the results of its winter 2020-2021 consultation in the present report. It is hoped that this report will contribute to a collective understanding of what is working when it comes to welcoming newcomers to Cape Breton-Unama'ki - as well as those areas where more is needed.

# Methodology

From December 2020 to March 2021, the CBLIP worked in collaboration with an external research consultant to develop a research strategy, conduct data collection and analyze the resulting findings. The following research questions guided the overall process:

**What are the challenges for newcomers settling in Cape Breton-Unama'ki?**  
**What are the opportunities to improve the settlement experience?**



## Data Collection

Given the nature of the research content, the target audience, and COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, it was determined that data would be best collected primarily through online tools.

Online data collection was conducted through two surveys, focus group discussions, and interviews.

## Surveys

Two surveys were developed, with questions designed to improve understanding of the research questions identified above. The surveys were designed for two distinct groups of participants:

- **individuals who are, or have ever been, newcomers to Canada and who now live in Cape Breton (i.e. foreign-born residents of the Island) and;**
- **individuals who were born in Canada and live in Cape Breton (i.e. Canadian-born residents of the Island).**

The former were asked to complete the 'Newcomer Survey' and the latter were asked to complete the 'Community Survey'.

Surveys were conducted using the Survey Monkey platform, in English. Potential participants were invited to indicate if they would prefer to complete the survey on paper, by phone, or in a different language. No individual opted for any of the alternative delivery modes or different language. Please see more on this topic in the 'Limitations' section below.

Surveys were a combination of closed and open-ended questions. Members of the CBLIP Council and Immigrant Advisory Table reviewed the draft survey and provided feedback, also assisting in pilot testing the survey for fluidity, length and comprehension. Once finalized, surveys were opened, and participation was promoted through a predetermined communication strategy.

116 respondents took part in the 'Newcomer Survey'. Five of the sets of survey responses were removed from the pool as the respondents were Canadian-born. As such, the total number of responses for analysis of this survey was 111.

215 respondents took part in the 'Community Survey'. Eighteen responses were removed from that pool, as they indicated that they were born outside of Canada. The final total number of surveys for analysis was 197.

## Focus Groups & Interviews

Focus groups and interviews were conducted online, via Zoom, with survey participants who indicated an interest in participation. These conversations were designed to provide a platform for those who may like to share their perspectives in greater depth than what was possible via the surveys. It was emphasized that participation in the Zoom calls was possible either online or via telephone.

Based on participant responses, two focus groups were scheduled with respondents to the 'Newcomer Survey'. Each session was two hours in length, scheduled at a time most convenient for those participating. Each of the two sessions included three newcomer participants, the CBLIP Program Manager and the research consultant.

Discussions were facilitated to ensure that each participant was able to contribute to the conversation. In addition, two interviews were held on Zoom with respondents to the 'Community Survey'. During these interviews, there was one participant in attendance, along with the CBLIP Program Manager and research consultant.

During both focus groups and interviews, questions were designed to build on the responses given through the surveys. Questions were open-ended and, in the case of focus groups, discussion between participants was encouraged. All discussions were recorded for the purpose of thematic analysis.

For those who were interested in participating in focus groups or interviews, but were unable to attend, the discussion questions were provided in written form and participants were invited to compile their thoughts and send back via email.

## Communication Strategy

With the support of Communications team at the Cape Breton Partnership, a strategy was developed to promote the survey and communicate with potential participants. The strategy included:

- **A press release;**
- **Advertisements in radio and newspapers across Cape Breton;**
- **Social media advertising;**
- **Drafted email correspondence for cohesive messaging; and**
- **The use of a digital billboard.**

In addition to the above, targeted communication was made to CBLIP Council member organizations, Immigrant Advisory Table (IAT) members and Cape Breton Partnership staff. Individuals and organizations were asked to share the survey details widely within their networks.

## Definitions

Throughout the consultation, participants were provided with operational definitions of key terms to foster clarity in understanding and consistency in results. Examples of definitions provided to participants included:

**Discrimination** is when people are treated unfairly because they are seen as being different from others.

**Friendship** is when you have formed a bond with a person that you know - a bond of mutual support, help, reliance and that provides positivity to your surroundings.

**Sense of Belonging** is when people feel accepted and valued by others around them. It is feeling like Cape Breton Island is truly your home.

## Data Analysis

All data collected was analyzed employing qualitative thematic analysis. The collected findings from surveys, focus groups and interviews were individually coded. Subsequently, a list of topics and themes was developed to clearly organize and present participants' perspectives and experiences.

Conversational analysis was embedded in the process between the research consultant and the CBLIP Program Manager so as to share ongoing insight into the findings and to ensure the relevance of themes. The conversational process directed, reflected, re-directed and shaped the analysis to ensure a retained focus on the primary research questions.

## Limitations

It is acknowledged that an online-based research strategy includes limitations in terms of accessibility. If possible, it is recommended that future research initiatives include more robust in-person, telephone and paper options for participation. In addition, more targeted outreach and participation support is recommended to better include those for whom language may have been a barrier during this consultation.



# Findings

In this section, the findings of surveys, focus groups and interviews are presented. The direct quotes shared throughout this section appear as they were provided in written or verbal format from the participants, including the use of slang and any spelling or grammatical errors. The intention is to share the perspectives of participants as accurately as possible, without risk of changing the essence or meaning of their message.

“I bring my unique professional expertise and cultural background to make the island a more inclusive and vibrant society.”

“I started my own business and created work for me and my Canadian friends.”

“I can offer my service and skill to improve the economy and give Cape Breton a more diverse background.”

## Survey Findings

# Newcomer Survey

### Participant Profile

A total of **111** newcomer respondents are included in the results below. Participants' ages ranged between **15 to 65** years or older, with most being between **25 to 44** years old. **50 per cent** self-identified as female, **49 per cent** as male, and **1 per cent** preferred not to say. Nine per cent of participants disclosed they were living with a physical or mental disability, or a chronic illness that limited their activity. There were **27** different countries of birth represented among respondents, with the highest numbers from India (**41** respondents) and the United States (**11** respondents).

In terms of immigration status, **36 per cent** of respondents are work permit holders, **33 per cent** have a study permit, with lower representation from those who are permanent residents (**17 per cent**) and citizens (**15 per cent**). Regardless of their amount of time lived in Cape Breton-Unama'ki, the majority of respondents reported their total time in Canada as being close to the same, suggesting that their settlement experiences in Canada have taken place predominantly in Cape Breton-Unama'ki.

Newcomers were asked to share what skills, talents and strengths they were eager to share. Respondents complete the sentence “Cape Breton-Unama'ki is a better community...”:



## Language

All participants spoke English, with **33 per cent** of participants speaking English as their first language. **Seventy-four per cent** of respondents for whom English is an additional language self-assessed that they are fluent in English and **16 per cent** said that they can converse easily about everyday things and do not need to search for words.

First language French speakers represented **1 per cent** of respondents. **Eighteen per cent** of respondents said that they are complete beginners in French and are not at all proficient and **13 per cent** were familiar with a few common words and phrases.

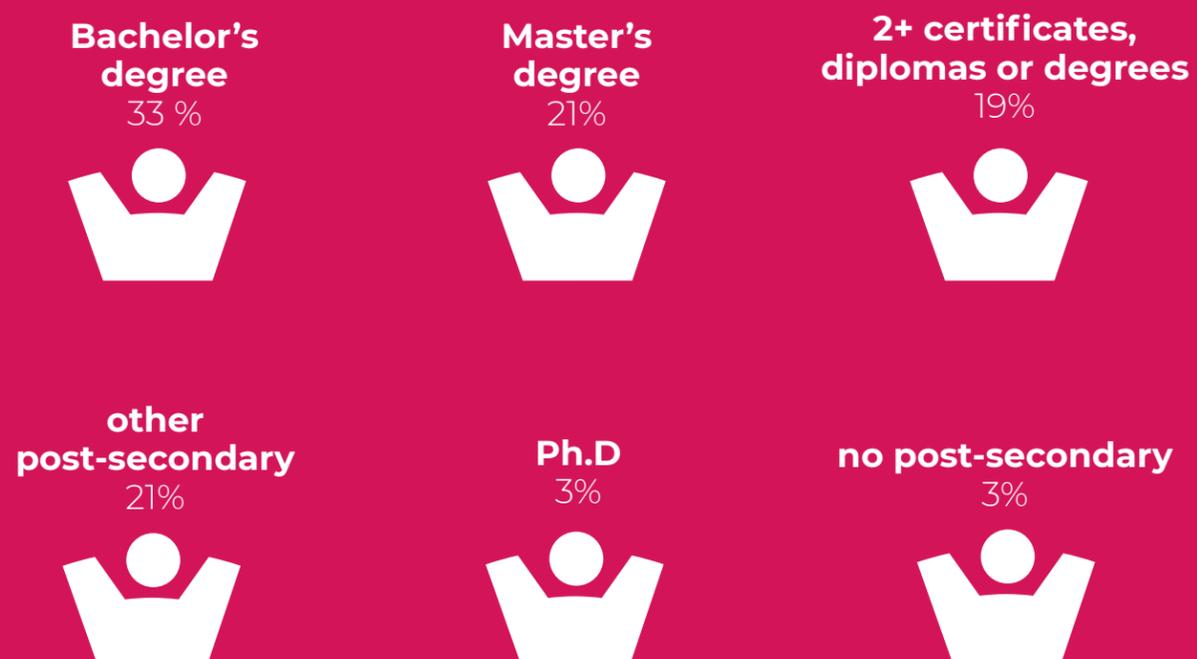


## Location and Housing

Responses were received from individuals living in every municipal unit in Cape Breton-Unama'ki, with the vast majority residing in Cape Breton Regional Municipality (**78 per cent**). A smaller number of responses were received from Inverness County (**10 per cent**), Richmond County (**6 per cent**), Victoria County (**5 per cent**), and Port Hawkesbury (**1 per cent**).

**Thirty-five per cent** of participants live in rented, shared apartments or houses where they have their own room, while **29 per cent** have their own home with a mortgage. **Seventy-two per cent** of respondents were satisfied, or very satisfied with their living accommodations.

## Highest Education Level of Respondents



## Employment and Education

Respondents were highly educated, with **98 per cent** having completed post-secondary studies.

There was also a high level of employment (**76 per cent**) among respondents, with **39 per cent** working full-time, **30 per cent** part-time and **7 per cent** self-employed. Sixty-**three per cent** of those who are employed are working in areas outside of their chosen career.

Of those who are employed:

- **56 per cent disagree that it is easy to find a job**
  - **42 per cent disagree that they are being paid a fair wage**
  - **42 per cent strongly disagree that their job fits their education and experience**
- and:
- **42 per cent agree they work a suitable number of hours per week**
  - **53 per cent agree that their employers offer adequate training opportunities**
  - **94 per cent agree or strongly agree that their employer follows Nova Scotia employment standards**
  - **47 per cent of employed agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with their current job.**

**Fifty-eight per cent** of respondents were looking for employment (**12 per cent** were not employed and looking for work and **46 per cent** were employed and looking to change or improve their current job).

Those who reported the lowest level of English among respondents (being able to carry on a basic conversation about everyday things but still need some support) represented **9 per cent** of all survey respondents and were more likely than others to be unemployed and looking for work.

## Social Connectedness and Belonging

**Seventy-five per cent** of respondents indicated that they are a member of a faith community, from which Christianity was listed as the most common with **47 per cent**.

Many survey respondents commented on their relative lack of social engagement, noting a lack of communication regarding activities that are available to join.

“I would love to participate. I’m not aware of events”.

Respondents said that they socialize during their free time with friends born in Canada (**70 per cent** of respondents) and friends who were also born outside of Canada (**81 per cent**). Of those participating in organized social activities, **25 per cent** said that they have taken on a leadership role in the groups or organizations they are involved with.

Participants that volunteer accounted for nearly half (**45 per cent**), with the largest proportion volunteering between **one** and **five** hours per month (**50 per cent**), and **31 per cent** volunteering between **six** and **10** hours.

Voting engagement was low amongst participants, with **79 per cent** of participants reporting not being eligible to vote. For those that are eligible to vote, they were most likely to have voted in municipal or provincial elections, rather than federal.

Overall, **81 per cent** of participants reported a positive sense of belonging in Cape Breton-Unama'ki, versus **18 per cent** with a negative sense of belonging. Breaking it down further, **49 per cent** of respondents had a very strong sense of belonging and **32 per cent** had a somewhat strong sense of belonging. Meanwhile, **16 per cent** had a somewhat weak sense of belonging and **2 per cent** had a very weak sense of belonging. **One per cent** did not have an opinion.

Also contributing to respondents' positive sense of belonging:

- **88 per cent of respondents have made friends in Cape Breton-Unama'ki; and**
- **86 per cent feel welcomed in their communities.**

When asked if, in general, they think that newcomers and other community members are connecting with each other, **53 per cent** of respondents said they believed they were, while **36 per cent** were not sure and **10 per cent** said that they were not. In their open-ended responses, participants shared that they find the community friendly and welcoming, but worry that there is a gap between welcoming and inclusion. It is also challenging to know where to go and how to connect with people.

## Experience During COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, participants felt that their social isolation was an average of 6.1 on a scale of one to 10, with one being not at all isolated and 10 being extremely isolated.

Those that have been living in Cape Breton-Unama'ki for less than one year were less likely to feel isolated, in comparison to those who have been residents from **one to five** years feeling much more isolated with ratings from **seven to 10** on the scale.

Also of note, respondents who are employed (full-time and part-time) were most likely to feel socially isolated in comparison to those that are self-employed or unemployed.

Student permit holders and work permit holders were more likely to feel isolated than those with permanent residency.

**When it came to feelings of connection during COVID-19:**

- **58 per cent felt less connected to colleagues and classmates;**
- **49 per cent felt less connected to their neighbours;**
- **47 per cent felt less connected to friends in Canada;**
- **44 per cent felt no difference in connection with people in their household;**
- **44 per cent felt no difference in connection to friends in other countries; and**
- **38 per cent felt more connected to family in other countries.**

**Participants experienced varying degrees of difficulty in areas of their lives during COVID-19:**

- **53 per cent found it more difficult to make friends and maintain healthy relationships;**
- **45 per cent found it more difficult to access health care than before;**
- **45 per cent found it more difficult to find and maintain work; and**
- **42 per cent found it more difficult to access public or social services.**

## Experiences of Discrimination

**Ninety-three per cent** of respondents feel Cape Breton-Unama'ki is safe (**52 per cent** feel it is "very safe" and **41 per cent** say it is "safe").

For the purposes of the survey, discrimination was defined as people being treated unfairly because they are seen as being different from others. When asked if respondents had experienced discrimination, it was nearly an even response (**49 per cent** had and **51 per cent** had not).

The largest proportion of those who had experienced discrimination said that they experienced it due to ethnicity, culture, race or skin colour. The next most frequent area of discrimination reported was due to language or accent, then religious beliefs.

Respondents were asked about places or situations during which they experienced discrimination.

**The most frequent responses, in ranked order, were:**

- 1. in a store, bank or restaurant;**
- 2. at work;**
- 3. on the street;**
- 4. applying for a job;**
- 5. looking for housing;**
- 6. at school or university;**
- 7. at a doctor's office or in a hospital.**

When asked if respondents had **witnessed** the discrimination against others, **62 per cent** had not and **39 per cent** had. Those who had witnessed discrimination said that this happened most frequently: in a store, bank or restaurant; on the street; at work; or at school or university. In order of frequency, respondents reported having witnessed discrimination related to: ethnicity or culture; race or skin colour; language or accent; religion or beliefs; gender identity and age.

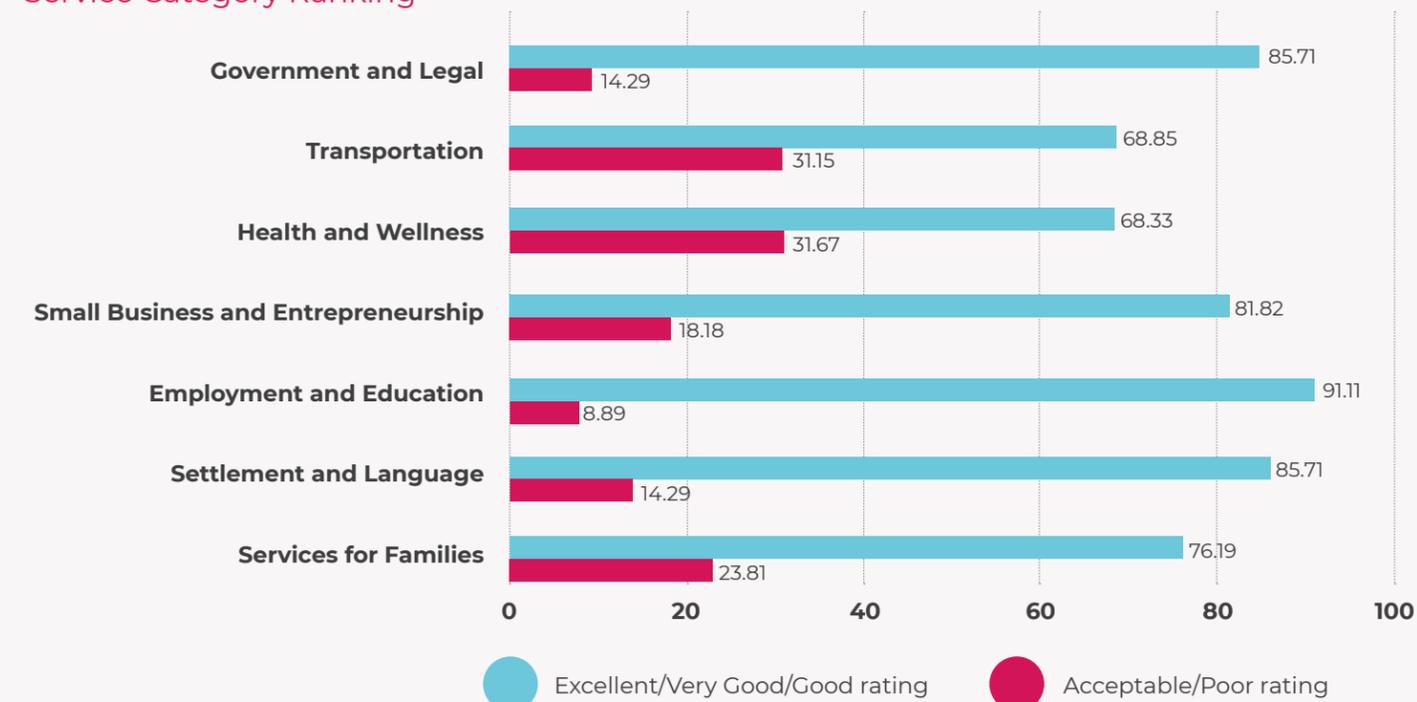
## Service Use and Experience

The survey asked respondents about their experiences related to services in Cape Breton-Unama'ki. Seven broad service categories were developed to understand respondents' overall experiences in each category. Respondents were asked to share more specific comments through open-ended comment boxes. Several specific responses are included in direct quotes below.

*All quotes are directly from respondents and have not been altered in any way.*

Overall, satisfaction with services in Cape Breton-Unama'ki was relatively positive. The most common ways of learning about available services were through family members, friends, or social media. The following chart lists the seven service categories included and the percentage of respondents who provided an Excellent, Very Good, or Good rating compared with those who provided an Acceptable or Poor rating.

### Service Category Ranking





## Government and Legal Services

Most respondents and/or their family members (**81 per cent**) had used some kind of government or legal service since arriving, typically learning about the service from friends, family members, social media, or an internet search (in that order). The services in this broad category may have included anything from visiting Service Canada or Access Nova Scotia to services offered by their municipal unit, the police or lawyers.

This was also one of the most highly rated categories, with **86 per cent** of respondents saying their experiences overall had been good, very good or excellent. For those with negative experiences, the most common reason was lack of sufficient information. Other areas of concern included: long wait times, unfriendly staff, lack of coordination between services and low accessibility.

“Knowing where to go for the right services sometimes can be confusing for newcomers, because we may not know if a service we are looking for is under the Canadian or provincial government, IE: Service Canada, Access Nova Scotia”

## Transportation Services

Transportation was another commonly used service area, with **78 per cent** of respondents and/or a family member having used transportation services in Cape Breton-Unama’ki. These may have included services like: Strait Area Transit, Transit Cape Breton (CBRM), taxis, shuttles, regional bus, bicycle routes, walking routes, etc.

Thirty-one per cent of those who had used transportation services ranked them as either ‘acceptable’ or ‘poor’. Lack of accessibility and long wait times were the main reasons cited.

More than half of the respondents (**56 per cent**) said that they did not need transportation services, and **17 per cent** were not aware of transportation services, but would have used it if they were available and they knew about them.

### Additional comments received:

“Need more transit to Glace Bay route and inner areas of Glace Bay”

“Came in 2018 in Cape Breton at that time was very less buses But now a tremendous increase in buses Now we have good shelter spaces”

“There should be bus service for Sunday too”

“I understand that due to low ridership it is uneconomical to have more than one bus per hour but it’s difficult for those who depend solely on these buses.”

“We need governments to prioritise inter-region transportation”

## Health and Wellness

The third most used service category among respondents was health and wellness, reported to be used by **71 per cent** of the participants. This may include services from a family doctor, hospital emergency room, dentist, eye doctor, mental health programs, addiction support services, disability support programs, or others.

This category was among the lower-ranked in terms of satisfaction, with positive (good, very good, excellent) feedback provided by **68 per cent** and **32 per cent** reporting poor or acceptable experiences overall. Long wait times were the primary reason given for dissatisfaction. Lack of coordination between services and lack of sufficient information were also reported.

### Additional comments received:

“One of the very few complaints we have is over the difficulty of getting a doctor here. I understand, and anticipated it, but have not found a way to deal with it.”

“Wait times and lack of sufficient staff again impact service delivery. Poor service coordination means that even after seeing a psychiatrist, you can’t get a meds prescription without a family doctor which is impossible.”

## Employment and Education

The fourth highest used service group was employment and education, **53 per cent** of respondents used the services within employment and education, **47 per cent** have not.

Services in this broad category included: children’s school, high school diploma programs, technical or skilled trades classes, post-secondary courses, professional development opportunities, job search training and others.

This was a highly-rated category in terms of satisfaction, with positive feedback provided by **91 per cent** of those respondents who had used services in the category. For those who reported ‘acceptable’ or ‘poor’ experiences, low accessibility and cultural barriers were among the primary challenges.

For those that have not used the service, a large portion of respondents said they were not aware of services available in this category but would have used them if they had been.

### Additional comment received:

“The employees gave standard answers. They gave no guidance to really help solve the problem. The impression I have is that they only help Canadians to get work and do not want to help immigrants adapt and stay in the Cape Breton region. In large centers like Halifax and Toronto, there is more support for the adaptation of immigrants.”

## Services for Families

Only **24 per cent** of respondents said that they had used services for families, which may have included childcare, parenting programs, family counseling services, etc.

Fifty-seven per cent of participants had heard about the services in this category from a friend or family member, again emphasizing the importance of word of mouth in communicating about services available.

Positive (good, very good, or excellent) ratings were provided by **76 per cent** of respondents using services in this category. Those reporting poor or acceptable experiences cited challenges due to lack of coordination between services, cultural barriers, long wait times and unfriendly staff.

**Additional comments received:**

“Many good service ideas are in place but lack of staff impacts service delivery/availability”

“Need to be more accessible and cut long waiting list and time to have service for families”

### Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Thirteen per cent of respondents reported having used services related to small business and entrepreneurship, which may have included business planning services, sales and marketing services, networking opportunities, funding programs and others. Once again, respondents reported learning about services from friends or family (**55 per cent**) and social media (**45 per cent**) most commonly.

This was another highly-rated category with **82 per cent** of users rating their satisfaction with their experience as positive (good, very good, or excellent). For those reporting negative experiences, the top reason cited was lack of sufficient information, followed by cultural barriers, lack of sufficient information and low accessibility.

For those that did not use small business and entrepreneurship services, **49 per cent** said that it was because they did not need them and **31 per cent** said that if they had known about the services, they would have used them.

**Additional comments received:**

“It’s necessary more orientations about that opportunities.”

“Criteria too hard to meet for finances”

### Settlement and Language

The least used service category among respondents was settlement and language services with just **7 per cent** of respondents noting themselves or a family member had used services like language classes, interpretation services, or settlement services.

For those who had used services in this category, satisfaction was high with positive (good, very good or excellent) rankings from **86 per cent** of respondents. Those reporting lower levels of satisfaction cited redundancy of information and having to search intensively for information.

For those that did not use the service (**93 per cent** of total respondents) **40 per cent** said that it was because they did not need the services and **38 per cent** reported that they were not aware of the services and that had they been, they would have used them.

Breaking it down further, from those that were not aware of settlement and language services, **23 per cent** were permanent residents and **22 per cent** now had citizenship and likely would have been eligible for many settlement supports in the community.

**Additional comments received:**

“We researched about it and luckily found it”

“I was not aware/don’t know what these initialisms/programmes are!”

“I came to know about it now”

## Top Challenges

1. Finding or maintaining work
2. Making friends and maintaining healthy relationships
3. Finding affordable housing
4. Accessing health care
5. Accessing transportation

Answer Choices	Responses
Finding or maintaining work	<b>51 per cent</b>
Making friends and maintaining healthy relationships	<b>35 per cent</b>
Finding affordable housing	<b>35 per cent</b>
Accessing health care	<b>34 per cent</b>
Accessing transportation	<b>31 per cent</b>
Paying mortgage or rent	<b>26 per cent</b>
Accessing public or social services (e.g. settlement services, government services, etc.)	<b>19 per cent</b>
Making sure my kids are okay at school and in the community	<b>15 per cent</b>
Experiencing discrimination or racism	<b>13 per cent</b>
Accessing food	<b>13 per cent</b>
Improving language skills	<b>10 per cent</b>
Other	<b>10 per cent</b>
Accessing childcare	<b>6 per cent</b>

# Top Supports

Respondents were also asked about what has helped them the most while they settled in. Since arriving to Cape Breton-Unama'ki the top things that have helped survey respondents were:

1. **Making friends**
2. **Exploring the Island**
3. **Finding work**
4. **Having family support**
5. **Connection with others that share your background or language**

Answer Choices	Responses
Making friends	69 per cent
Exploring the Island	53 per cent
Finding work	46 per cent
Having family support	34 per cent
Connection with others that share your background or language	30 per cent
Support from educational institutions	27 per cent
Volunteering	24 per cent
Belonging to a religious group	21 per cent
Other	7 per cent
Settlement worker	3 per cent



Additional comments received about what has helped most in settling in:

“Sydney Credit Union that made a lot of difference. I got a mortgage to buy a house from the same bank (...). They are the best! Getting the job I am doing now was so wonderful. Thankful to (two individuals) for not worrying about the colour of skin and ‘coming from away’.”

“Volunteering WILL be very helpful once the world is open again. I would have been helping out with Celtic Colours this year at the least and had already reached out for that.”

**When asked about changes that may allow everyone to feel more welcomed and supported, participants wrote about actively working toward reduction and removal of barriers, and creating support for newcomer community members. Respondents shared the following comments:**

“Rather than using “positive discrimination” tactics by focusing on providing services for people with limited or no English language skills, ensure that ALL newcomers are welcomed equally and helping ALL newcomers assimilate into the local community rather than separating into ethnic groups”



“If the person has a truly welcoming and genuine desire for new employees to be part of the team, then it is up to the supervisor and colleagues to do so from the beginning, to learn to be welcoming and the importance and advantages of a multicultural workforce.”

“Treat non-locals as locals who chose to live in the area. Make the area more accepting by accepting diversity both culturally, linguistically, religiously ... Teach the young that religion, skin colour, beliefs and cultures add to the local community, not take away and segregate it.”

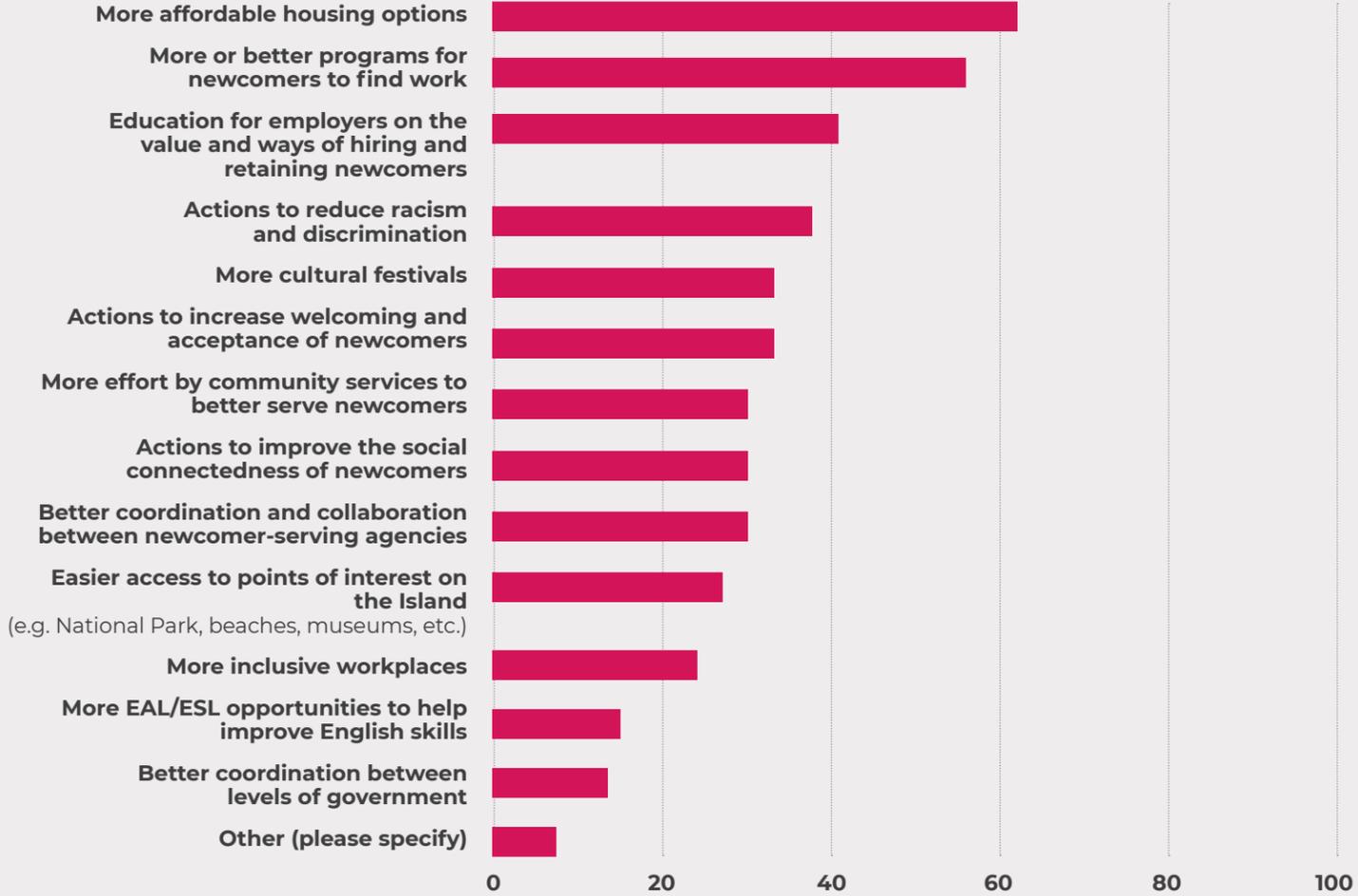
“Not seeing immigrants as people who work minimum wage jobs.”

“Have a way to track and welcome newcomers. I only knew of the service because I read an article in the paper. Once here, I’ve been totally on my own trying to feel my way through establishing myself and my business. I have had no agency or government help”



To feel more supported, the top six changes that newcomer respondents would like to see are:

- 1. More affordable housing options**
- 2. More or better programming for newcomers to find work**
- 3. Education for employers on the value and ways of hiring and retaining newcomers**
- 4. Actions to reduce racism and discrimination**
- 5. More cultural festivals**
- 6. Actions to increase welcoming and acceptance of newcomers**





Additional comments from respondents on the changes that are needed:

“The key is housing. Without proper housing all else cannot happen. Housing is key for establishing ties in a community, finding work and establishing friendships and business.”

“Several people see immigrants as ‘stealing jobs’ from residents in the region. However, they do not realize that the vast majority of immigrants have a lot of life and professional experience that can help in the development of the region (in addition to paying taxes, who also contributes to the community).”

“When we are viewed as equals. Afforded equal opportunities. Open mindedness without assumptions. Access to supports: healthcare, rental exploitation protection, access to subsidised legal services for protection against exploitation (workplace), community events when possible, access to consumer protection.”

“More social activities to learn more about the community”

Respondents also offered suggestions to improve welcoming, integration and well-being:

“Offer a temporary “buddy”, a selection of locals willing to shop, do coffee - or tea, go for walks; first companions who can help with directions, introductions, etc. Provide important info like where to buy things, how septic systems and wells work (“intro to country living” workshops?); how to use the crazy phone book; how to throw things away - or not, and like that!”

“More information about programs that are available”

“Perhaps advertisements for event add that “all are welcome” or “newcomers welcome””

“There could be a center and committee at every community that are there to protect and help newcomers”



# Community Survey

Like respondents to the Newcomer Survey, those who participated in the Community Survey offered their thoughts and perspectives regarding newcomers' settlement in Cape Breton-Unama'ki. In many cases, the feedback gathered in the Community Survey was qualitative in nature, with participants sharing written responses. In this section of the report, many direct quotes are included to share these important perspectives in the words of the participants themselves.

## Participant Profile

One-hundred-ninety-seven Canadian-born residents of Cape Breton-Unama'ki completed the 'Community Survey'. All respondents completed the online version of the survey and no one inquired about translation support or the options to complete the survey on paper or over the phone.

**Fifty-two per cent** of respondents had always lived in Cape Breton-Unama'ki, while **23 per cent** have lived on the Island for 10 or more years. **Sixty-seven per cent** of respondents are residents of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, **30 per cent** reside in the municipalities of the counties of Inverness, Victoria, Richmond or the Town of Port Hawkesbury, and **two per cent** of respondents reside in the First Nations communities of Membertou, Eskasoni, Potlotek, Wagmatcook or Waycobah.

Participants' ages ranged between 20 and 65 years or older, with most common age ranges being 35 to 44 and 55 to 64 years old.

**Seventy-two per cent** of respondents identified themselves as female, **24 per cent** as male, **two per cent** preferred not to say and **two per cent** self-described.

**Eighteen per cent** of participants disclosed they were living with a physical or mental disability or a chronic illness that limited their activity.

The top first languages of respondents were English (**92 per cent**), French (**four per cent**), and Mi'kmaq (**one per cent**) with three per cent listing other languages as their first. Eighty per cent of participants described their sense of belonging in Cape Breton-Unama'ki as positive, versus **18 per cent** having a negative sense of belonging. Interestingly, respondents to the Newcomer Survey reported a slightly higher (**81 per cent**) positive sense of belonging.

The breakdown of education level of respondents was as follows:

- **24 per cent Bachelor's Degree**
- **20 per cent Master's Degree or licensed professional degree**
- **14 per cent Secondary school**
- **13 per cent One-year program at a university, college, trade or technical school**
- **13 per cent Two or more certificates, diplomas or degrees**
- **13 per cent Two-year program at a university, college trade or technical school**
- **3 per cent Doctoral level university degree (PhD)**
- **1 per cent had no formal education.**

Sixty-seven per cent of respondents are employed (**48 per cent** full-time, **10 per cent** part-time and nine per cent self-employed). Of those that are self-employed, **65 per cent** employ only themselves, **12 per cent** employ one to nine employees and **18 per cent** employ 10 to 49 people. For those participants that have employees in their business, **13 per cent** have one to nine newcomer employees.

### Contributions of Newcomers

Respondents expressed strong appreciation for the worldview, knowledge, skills, experience, and energetic hard-working attitudes that newcomer members of their communities contribute. Respondents shared their affinity for a culturally-enriched Cape Breton-Unama'ki.

Respondents shared the following thoughts when asked about what newcomers bring to the community:

“Worldly experience and innovation”

“broaden our world perspectives; diverse cultural traditions, culinary traditions; excellent customer service when in retail employment; additions to our population, especially the youth component”

“Experience, their foods and flavours, fresh ideas for business, work force and taxpayers”

“Experience, perspective and a great work ethic”

“new experiences and lessons”

“enlightenment, encouragement”

“a new outlook and a new way of living to our communities!”

“Good people, hard workers, in some cases educated people. The ones I have encountered appear to be polite”

“Knowledge, creativity, expanded language and cultural difference”

“Their own cultures with them and we share each other's cultures”

“Diversity, new ideas and a better work ethic”

“Fresh new ideas which help our local economy and also benefit the local economy by purchasing their own essential needs and food from local businesses. They enrich our community by bringing new culture to our area”

“fresh ideas, experiences and world views.”

“They bring new ideas about things, share their fashion style and their traditional cooking and baking. They share a new insight on the area we live in, when they share why they wanted to come to our area to live.”

“New ideas. Opening up new cultures. Providing new learning experiences.”

“a rich tapestry of diverse cultures which we otherwise may not have had the opportunity to experience”

“Culture, new things to learn and see, they bring needed money to our local economies. They bring stories and history that people may never elsewhere hear or experience”

“Energy, ideas, vibrancy, and a commitment and love of a new home they're worked hard to come to”



“Knowledge and understanding of other cultures. Not only from other countries but also a different perspectives on other areas of Canada.”

“So much! We have always been a diverse community and now even more so. I love meeting newcomers and learning about their culture”

“Positive, energetic hard working attitudes”

“Unskilled labour to fill the medial positions in the labour market that local people don’t want or won’t do.”

“Skills, labour, economic development”

“new culture, economic growth”

“work ethic, new perspectives and skills, great food, kind hearts”

One participant offered their perspective and concerns regarding the attention needed to care for the natural environment in Cape Breton-Unama’ki and highlighting the importance of continuing to teach new generations about nature conservation:

“Quite frankly living here all my life compared to when I was a kid sydney is becoming overcrowded and the last thing we need on this island is more people. Its so hard everything is always packed theres no housing for famalies and the streets and woods are littered with garbage from people who dont care about our island. Ive picked up so much trash with my kids from students dumping it at the entrance to the bailleard trails seeing tourists throw trash on the beach at Mira Gut. Cruise ships trash goes right over the side into our waters. This island is being destroyed. My family has lived here over 300 years and my grandparents would weep if they saw what a mess we are allowing people to make of it. Cape Breton needs to work on helping local famalies that will take care of it first, and not being a hater I love all people, but the island is suffering”

## Welcoming & Social Connection

When asked if, in general, they think that newcomers and other community members are connecting with each other, only **40 per cent** of participants think that it is happening, a nearly equal amount (**39 per cent**) were not sure and **22 per cent** do not think so. In contrast, **53 per cent** of respondents to the newcomer survey had said they felt that these connections were happening.

**Sixty-six per cent** of respondents say they have friendships with newcomers who live in Cape Breton-Unama’ki. When asked about where they are forming these friendships, participants responded: through work

(**57 per cent**), mutual friends or acquaintances (**49 per cent**), in their neighbourhood (**40 per cent**), recreational groups (**23 per cent**), and through family (**19 per cent**).

Although **95 per cent** of participants see diversity as beneficial to the community, only **59 per cent** believe that Cape Breton-Unama’ki as a welcoming place. **Twenty-two per cent** were not sure and **20 per cent** did not think so.



Respondents were asked about how members of their community welcome newcomers. Although some participants were not sure about how their community welcomes newcomers or felt that the welcome may not be coming from a genuine place, others shared examples of welcoming actions:

“I don’t know. We do it well at my workplace but I don’t think newcomers are welcomed in the community”

“I’m unaware of anything at this time”

“Not sure there is anything formally done in New Waterford area”

“I’m not sure - we have become a larger population, so I’m not sure what’s being done; but making connections in the community, that are sustained and ensuring relevant resources used by Immigrants have what they need to ensure a welcome and helpful atmosphere is important”

“They don’t - community members thrive on gossip and only socialize with newcomers to gather information they then use in their respective gossips circles.”

“That’s a wide spectrum with everything from “go home” to “please come into my home”. Locals are either super accepting or not at all sadly”

“they ask them about where they are from and ask why they are here...”

“The Welcome Wagon”

“Friendly acts. For instance we have a new Indian family in Port Hood and some locals dropped off a xmas present for their daughter.”

“Food, invitations to community events”

“Every one of our neighbours went over and introduced themselves and, because they were still self isolating, we offered to pick up anything they might need”

“The ones that are accepting and welcoming will usually introduce themselves, maybe make them some baked goods or something similar.”



“They have them in for dinner and help drive them to church and other community activities.”

“A variety of programs are available through agencies and CBU.”

“By treating them like the locals, inviting them to events, and helping them find jobs”

“Where some newcomers have religious interests (e.g. the many Christian students from Kerala state in India), churches welcome them (they beef up the size of the congregation!). Some reach out on a one-on-one basis to invite newcomers to events, to their houses, etc. Some of course provide employment opportunities.”

“General friendliness. In my neighbourhood, we talk to our neighbours and offer help when needed. I had a neighbour from China for a while and I helped her with navigating many of our systems. In return, she would give me food from time to time as a treat. ;)”





Participants were asked about the programs or resources they know about that are supporting newcomers. Some did not know of any and some shared their knowledge of existing program and their perceptions of these (both positive and negative):

“I believe New Dawn has a support program but I don’t know much about it”

“My community is very small and there is nothing that I know of that helps support them...that’s why I think there should be more opportunities to get together to learn and support.”

“None that I have first hand knowledge of”

“None. We had one “multi-cultural food” and event once about 3 years ago to which most people proudly proclaimed they only went to for the “free food”.”

“Welfare checks. Handouts from taxpayers.”

“From what I hear there’s a contract employers are given saying ‘sign this and work for a year’ and they cannot get fired ..might just be a rumor”

“there are none that I know of that aren’t run by the locals that participate in fostering the problem further”

“I am unsure. I had hoped to gain this information and knowledge via Council however I have not received any follow up.

The River and Basin Historical Society is attempting to promote community events and initiatives to help strengthen Richmond and surrounding communities. Currently they are actively seeking funding via the government to repair certain elements of the building they function out of. Should this not occur the community will lose it’s hub and focal point and place to gather. To see another small rural community wiped off the map would be a sin.”

“That’s the problem there are too many groups, leaving out so many people who want to welcome newcomers. CBU is doing a great job. The Partnership and New Dawn seem to study it a lot but as a resident I don’t see anything concrete coming from their efforts.”

**The majority of responses positively highlighted programs or resources that support newcomers, including:**

“the Highland Arts Theater, Selkies and Dr. Luke’s provide strong informal support for newcomers as they feel like truly welcoming spaces.”

“New Dawn and Employment Services”

“Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Cape Breton Partnership, CBLIP Council & Working Groups, Immigrant Advisory Table, Cape Breton Regional Library English Conversation Series”

“I know there is an immigration Centre on Charlotte St. I am aware of welcoming volunteers that operate in communities. I believe CBU provides resources for foreign students. I know there are more but cannot specify them”

“University and community college, Cape Breton Farmers Market, food banks”

“Salvation Army. Kinsmen”

“Cape Breton Island Centre for Immigration, Immigration Support Cape Breton University, Cape Breton Partnership”

“CB partnership. Community groups”

“Settlement services, Cape Breton Welcome Network, library programs”

“Lifeline 224, Community Matters, Cheticamp Economic Council, Société Saint-Pierre all work to welcome newcomers, supply guidance and information”

“The Cape Breton Connector program”

“LIP, Welcome network, CBICI, YReach, ISANS”

“Immigration Francophone NÉ”

“Church has a food bank right at the church so people can come grab food, clothes, or toys if they need anything. I think the YMCA has programs for newcomers and of course, the cape Breton partnership has the immigration centre”

“Locally the St. Peter’s and Area Welcome Group and also the Nova Scotia Department of Immigration’s Outreach project.”

“I’m aware that some churches are very welcoming, the University have supports, NS works I think have been helpful”

“The welcome wagon is just getting off its feet, the library is a good public space, the Visitor Information helps a bit in the summer. I work at the last video store on the island and we used to get a lot of ppl who spoke german or french as a first language in to rent movies with subtitles in their language to help them learn english. there are also some fb groups/pages that try to keep everyone informed on what’s going on in the community”

“There is a new Welcome Wagon. The library has many programs and a cupboard full of free items and necessities. There is childcare.”



Community participants recognize that newcomers may choose to stay in the community for a variety of reasons. They spoke about the importance of welcoming communities and highlighted the importance of new community members feeling connected, having opportunities, housing, employment and being valued. Respondents shared that they think newcomers may choose to stay because of:

“Support from government agencies and opportunities for education and employment”

“Support, opportunities, connections, good quality of life”

“Connection, meaningful employment and engagement, family”

“Being able to build connections. Having enough positive experiences of the island that they want to continue living here. Finding a meaningful job.”

“Lower/affordable housing prices compared to larger cities. Job opportunities A sense of untapped potential in business opportunities”

“opportunity and cultural communities. They need jobs and they need to feel connected to their past life while building a new life”

“Employment opportunities would keep them here”

“Feeling valued for what they can contribute and given real opportunities to do so”

“feeling connected and having a job. Good schools, opportunities for their kids, and being with like minded people helps them to stay”

“Acceptance and inclusion, and opportunity.”

“I believe that our community is well known as a beautiful destination with friendly people. We are also very supportive of not only businesses started by newcomers but also supportive of the many foreign students who travel here to attend our university. Many of those students stay after graduation and become business owners contributing to our local economy.”

“They want to stay here because they feel welcomed and are excited by people they meet. They are not judged by their religion, or race, just as our forefathers were welcomed to make a fresh start in this new country when they came.”

“Community that reaches out, welcomes and values them”

“The feeling of being welcomed and valued for what they can bring to the community. Smaller communities where they can feel part of things”

Community members were also asked about what they think newcomers love about Cape Breton-Unama’ki.

Respondents suggested:

“Its beauty, friendliness and safety—much the same as what long-time residents feel”

“Life style, sense of community, education, welcoming environment”

“The opportunities to learn”

“Small community, friendly people, appreciative community”

“Safety! Natural beauty, friendliness, traditional values, culture, and tight-knit communities”

“Our Hospitality, its slow pace, job opportunities, its scenic Beauty and lower cost of living”

“Her friendly people are in the beauty of our Island”

“Warm people and strong sense of community, the stunning natural beauty, the musical culture.”

“That there is already people from many cultures here, and hopefully immigrants experience people here being open to new experiences and we are accepting, having endured hardship economically for many years ourselves.”

“Slow pace of living, more affordable than other places, low crime, and friendly people”

“Most of the newcomers I gave spoken to love our relaxed, easy going life style, especially if they have come from big cities.”

“It is generally laid back, friendly. There are opportunities for those who want them. Lots of open space. Beautiful beaches.”



# Witnessing Discrimination

Sixty-seven per cent of respondents said that they had witnessed discrimination against other people in Cape Breton-Unama'ki. The top places discrimination has been witnessed were: in a store, bank or restaurant (**56 per cent**), on the street (**48 per cent**), at work (**33 per cent**), at community events (**30 per cent**), at school or university (**28 per cent**), and when looking for housing (**20 per cent**).

Of those who had witnessed discrimination, **72 per cent** said that the discrimination they witnessed was based on race or skin colour. Discrimination based on language or accent was the next most common (**63 per cent**), then sexual orientation (**35 per cent**), gender identity (**31 per cent**), religion or beliefs (**30 per cent**), disability (**25 per cent**) and age (**21 per cent**).



# Moving Forward

There was a great deal of community input regarding the path forward and the changes that respondents believe would help in fostering more welcoming and inclusive communities. The following section provides a summary of the changes that participants suggested and specific actions they identified for local businesses and organizations, community members, and communities in general.

Community members shared the changes that they thought would lead to better support for newcomers.

The top choices from a ranked list were:

1. **More affordable housing options**
2. **Actions to improve the social connectedness of newcomers**
3. **More cultural festivals**

This list can be compared with the changes that newcomers themselves reported would help the most. Both groups ranked affordable housing as a top priority. Community members felt that improvements to social connection and cultural events were the next most important, while newcomers prioritized employment supports and employer education regarding the value of hiring newcomers.



Community participants shared additional changes that they believe would help:

“More events or learning on how it feels to come somewhere and know noone”

“Housing language training”

“Street parties, drop in centers, arts and crafts sessions, events that are advertised for both newcomers and blue blooded cape Bretoners.”

“it would be nice to have the opportunity to learn new languages to better connect the locals and the newcomers! (Hindi, Mandarin, Spanish, etc.)”

“More networking events”

“Plan / organize all events with the expectation that there will be new people who have to be intentionally welcomed, introduced, and valued. Things like name tags, introductions, and similar tactics go a long way. Also, respect of people’s names. Encourage people to work at learning new names and new pronunciations, rather than assigning nicknames”



“It would be great to see a more diverse mix of people in Inverness County, but I do think that will happen as more work opportunities make it appealing for people to move to the area. I would think events or spaces that allow those people to showcase their version of things Cape Bretoners already love (music, storytelling, community service, outdoor activities) would be a great way to connect people.”

“For everyone to have an equal opportunity and for people that are here and employed not to let go from their jobs or hours reduced just so they can hire new comers for maybe cheaper.”

“More jobs. It’s ironic how many people I know who say “I would never work at McDonalds or Wal-Mart” but then in return complain about “all the foreigners taking the jobs”. I think of Cape Breton had more jobs to entice educated people to stay here and work, it would go a long way in both making a community with more tolerant people and enticing other people to come into the area and stay. Also, if the general education of most Cape Bretoners was higher or at least at a better level, it would also help.”

“not sure...feeling welcome requires actually being welcome and made to belong because someone takes the time to consider what people need individually.”

**Changes that community participants think could be made which would allow newcomers to feel more welcome in Cape Breton-Unama’ki included: visibility, respect, clear communication and engagement.**

**Participants described their perspectives in detail:**

“The idea of home and family being the core of one’s social circle has to loosen. We need more opportunities for quality social interaction - independent cafes, places to recreate, low cost social enterprises. Get people out of their cars. Do that little extra to make our towns more beautiful and pedestrian friendly.”

“More opportunities to meet newcomers would be good. For several years they had a program whereby you could invite a student for Thanksgiving dinner. I felt that Thanksgiving was a large event and already complicated, I could not accommodate another person. I would really like a matching system whereby you can invite an international student for supper on an evening when you can actually have time to chat and get to know them.”

“We, the people who are from here, need to be more open-minded.”

“not sure...how do you tell a community they are being selfish and its only noticeable to those not belonging to the community...”

“Blind resume selection, more activities like what cbu did in the past - tours in the community/national days (for the immigrants countries), places of prayer other than Christianity allowed to use their call to prayer, holiday acknowledgement, culture sharing days, books in their languages, local news in their language (like a facebook live of Cape Breton News translated into their language), international radio station, welcome packs with museum passes faith info & international grocery store info, easier way to have their family join them (visit visas or family immigration programs), racism and cross cultural education...”

“Public education and workshops geared toward acceptance”

“Having open group discussions where sharing culture and education is provided. Everyone has a voice”

“By creating new activities, such as meet and greets, cultural get-togethers, where they could be involved in showing what their culture is like etc. Inviting them to attend entertainment venues, which they might not know is taking place, etc.”

“Improvement of communication, and increased opportunities for formally organized events. There is no information readily accessible to newcomers for recreational or connecting let alone health care options”

“Perhaps a welcome wagon committee, a CBRM location crawl where newcomers can go from venue to venue and learn about that venue, CBRM info/history, and meet locals”

“Care packages? Welcome to cape Breton boxes with tea, oatcakes, and coupons to some locally owned immigrant businesses?”

“Mentoring program to match newcomers with a settled family in the community”

“Having a CB Newcomer FB/Social Media Page interviewing the individual (like Humans of NY). It’s a chance for people to tell their story and be recognized in community.”

“I think they are seen as a cash cow for CBU and not as real members of our communities. Such an effort to get them here for their education but not enough to retain them as working members of our community. Better housing, better transit. CB needs so much investment, the list is too long.”

“More programming focused on retention and welcoming”

“There are things that can be done from an infrastructural level all the way down to interpersonal. Improve student housing and monitor for abuse of privilege by landlords, improve communications around



supports for newcomers, create promotions and initiatives for social programming that is conducive/inviting to both newcomers and Cape Breton-Unama'ki natives”

“This might seem like a small thing, but events were advertised as being at such-and-such a place, with no street address (and sometimes not even the name of the community). People who have lived here for many years know where this place is, but people who are new to Cape Breton don't know, so they either have to ask for help to find it (which is a barrier to participating), or miss out on the event.”

“Find out what they are interested in. If we have opportunities for them to keep those interests going, connect them with someone who can help”

**Reflections also included thinking about attitudes of tolerance:**

“There are two polar opposite people on Cape Breton. Those who are welcoming to anyone and anything and those who are not. The smaller the community the more intolerant they are. For example, I still often hear people at Wal-Mart complaining about “the brown ones”, and those ignorant and intolerant people ruin the entire image of a community. And as I said previously, a lot of these people have these issues so deeply seeded into them that there is no changing them. The immigrants that I've known have all left these areas, and I know that a few

have left because of the lack of acceptance or that one person who treated them badly or said something rude to them. Simply go on Facebook and look at the comment section of any post about an immigrant or a person of colour or a LGBT thing, it's easy to say “those are just internet trolls” but they're not. They're REAL people who have really dark and disturbing views about outsiders or anyone that's different than they are. So to conclude. The only change that can be made is to remove those intolerant people from the area which isn't possible. I guess more diversification at the younger educational levels might help make the future generations of Cape Breton be more tolerant (or at least those that don't move away as soon as they are adults.), but there's already a lot of deeply intolerant people that will likely never change their ways.”

“A welcoming library with local input and under the community's control. Less emphasis on education level achieved and more on actual experience and ability. I almost rejected this questionnaire due to its question on education level. The library management uses the same excuse to not allow local staff to manage programming in their communities. Education level. Perceptions of education level are divisive and often destructive here. It is used as a weapon similar to classism. It is often subtle but pushes people away.”

“Unfortunately, I think it's mostly rooted in attitude. In many ways, there is still a persistent idea that anyone not born here is a ‘come-from-away’ and that belonging is rooted in having generational family ties to Cape Breton. It's not as prevalent as it probably once was, but it still seems to be something clinging to the culture here that makes it hard for newcomers to feel like this is their home.”

### What Local Businesses and Organizations Can Do

**Participants were asked to consider what actions local businesses and organizations may be able to take to foster more welcoming communities:**

“Diversity training, diverse hiring, welcome signs / holiday greetings of minority groups”

“Get newcomers in leadership positions not just the bottom of the ladder”

“language resources, where local businesses can have job fairs to help immigrants, or local business reps directly connected to organizations like NS works, and grants in place to assist people finding work.”

“We need to develop the services and recreation that people expect. Cultural activities, quirky restaurants, recreation other than hockey. beauty. Port Hawkesbury has a waterfront that no one

uses. A yacht club of cottagers who do not seek new members. I have been trying to lead by example and kayaking in the Strait to demonstrate that we can use the water at our doorstep. We need the amenities that will attract and keep youth here”

“Continuous and proactive promotion of available services is always helpful. Making information widely and easily accessible would also help (it can be hard to find out about what exists in communities here because things are often communicated through word of mouth and many groups/businesses don't have a functional online presence)”

“People like to grow their own food. Build more community gardens. Welcome signs in windows make a difference. If other languages are spoken, let folks know with a sign. Organize English speaking meet ups for practice.”

“We need housing where newcomers can go to start in CB. and after a few years when they are settled they can buy their own place and then someone new can come and take their place”

“Better publicity of what is available here for all people, not just newcomers. A more open platform so we are aware of all organizations and the programs they offer”



“Focusing on token behavioural changes does not address the roots problems which are systemic”

“it would be nice to see businesses celebrating events and holidays from other religions and featuring some different cultural dishes/days so that people feel more at home”

“Local business should display stickers or other signs their business is welcoming to all types of newcomers. A rainbow sticker on an entrance door goes a long way for LGBTQI2S people.”

“I wish a community centre existed. I think Eskasoni has the right idea. The Margaree library had a really good welcoming vibe with great programs but the local staff have had all decision making control removed. It only became worse since covid and is a huge loss to the community.”

“Give them the Welcome Group information. It’s hard to know what to do if someone has just moved here and they’re shopping at your store. Maybe these stores should have some training as well. Customer tells them they are new and if trained with some information on how to welcome, they could give them some great information that could help them.”

“Make sure there is no discrimination on their hiring practices that disadvantage immigrants/newcomers. Emphasize the economic value of diversity. Seriously challenge any expression of “they’re taking away our jobs” (which I have never heard stated myself). Provide examples of success stories to the press/media. Make sure the Chamber of Commerce and the downtown business association have newcomer members.”

“Unfortunately unless whoever is on the board decides to make their meeting information public, and decides to question their management style I doubt things will improve. Boards of many organizations don’t seem to take their roles seriously.”

“The organizations who have welcome initiatives need to work with ALL businesses to ensure newcomers are able to place their skills and find employment. All too often a clique is formed and inclusivity in our own community for our own businesses is overlooked. As an Unama’ki team we will do better”

**One person shared an alternative perspective regarding the role of local businesses and organizations in welcoming newcomers:**

“Again this is the responsibility of immigrants and newcomers”

## What Community Members Can Do



**Participants were also asked about what they thought individual community members could do to help welcome newcomers. Responses included:**

“Actually pursuing friendship and involving newcomers in their lives in a meaningful and ongoing way. Actively providing the same sorts of opportunities to newcomers as they do to locals.”

“Inviting someone to go for a walk on the beach is much better than telling them we have great beaches”

“If people would just treat them as any other community member, not give them any special treatment over or under what they would to their normal neighbour, it would be great.”

“appreciate that it’s a mistake to confuse community pride with localism...stop talking about people and start talking to them”

“Simply by encouraging folks to be neighbourly and supportive and by taking the time to listen and learn about where they are coming from and who they are. Just as we would do for any new neighbour or co-worker.”

“We can be made more aware of their needs by the people who are first in contact with them”

“Talk to them. Be friendly. Embrace them and their cultures. Invite them to be involved”

“A program to assist newcomers to adapt to the climate, culture, etc., especially those from overseas”

“More opportunities to meet, to make a commitment in some sense to pursuing and building relationships with newcomers (through club, partnership or resource/knowledge sharing.)”

“This is a tough one because I’m not a newcomer and struggle with this too. I guess volunteering is how I’ve met new folks most.”

“Actively invite people to join community activities, clubs, committees. Invite them for a coffee.”

“Education regarding cultural differences, learning about their culture. Spending time getting to know them. Listening to them”

“Education of locals with more info about newcomers”



“Through employment opportunities. Most connections people make as adults are through work relationships. There needs to be more employment for everyone. Until then it will be very difficult to make meaningful connections.”

“Probably making sure to partner folks up with a local family would be the best way to introduce them to their neighbours and help them learn the new environment. Also activities at the community centre.”

“Support- assist [newcomers] with “connecting the dots”, albeit online or phone”



## What Community Initiatives Might Help



Although there were many that were not sure about what communities could do, a large portion of the participants identified ways to help improve the welcoming, integration and well-being of newcomers in Cape Breton-Unama’ki. Responses touched on communication, gatherings, inclusion in volunteer positions and job security, while also noting an affinity for bidirectional cultural education. Some shared responses:

“More organized as a community to ensure everyone is welcomed”

“some social meetings, possibly some of the immigrants, educating us in their values and culture would help local people understand better”

“Events that showcase their customs and what their life was like in the community they use to belong to would be nice to show them that we are interested in their life!”

“Workshops and public events”

“Stronger community engagement all the way around.”

“Having more conversations about what needs to be done is definitely the first step.”

“Thank you and welcome letters/cards from anonymous Cape Bretoners to newcomers would be a nice campaign. I think seniors could take part in (it) too. I imagine there

are many older folks who immigrated themselves decades ago who could write some heartfelt support to newcomers.”

“Ensuring new Canadians are represented in organizations and their programming”

“Encourage longer settled newcomers/immigrants to meet with recently arrived ones to share the benefit of their experiences and provide tips. Make sure that such forums emphasize the positive and do not become simply an opportunity to talk about grievances (one individual that I assisted many years ago joined an on-line forum for immigrants that consisted entirely of complaints, and certainly did him no good)”

“CBU should be the centralized point for newcomer welcoming, not scatter over the downtown. Most NSCC students are from within province? So CBU will remain the primary education choice. Having everything based out of CBU also makes it more accessible to community, rather than these private or not for profit organizations who no one really knows what they do.”



Cross-cultural festivals and food were noted as initiatives that were important to better connect. Other projects or initiatives that would help residents and newcomers to better connect with one another, such as:

“Cross cultural celebrations provide opportunities for people to learn about others. As well, maybe we could have some sort of group work that supports opportunities to work together or to teach others about their culture. Also, maybe there could be some sort of multicultural liaison group that travels to schools on the island to learn a bit of the language, games, dances, music and instruments, etc. to help educate our young people who are usually most accepting of diversity.”

“Some sort of meal share would be interesting. Like cooking classes hosted at The Better Bite? Or some industrial kitchen. Where each week a new meal is taught whether it is a Cape Breton staple, or a food from a different culture. It would be a nice exchange of knowledge. I am in my 30’s and I find it hard to connect outside of my social circle anyway. I don’t drink, or have children and that really limits the activities where I can run into new people. (barring the pandemic as well) Things I like to do: Hikes, movies, going to see music, eating. All of these things would be awesome for newcomers ESPECIALLY with a high number of immigrants whose cultures do not support drinking.



An organized hike in the Belle Ard, or the Membertou trail. If Cineplex brought in movies that were appealing to both community members and newcomers. And events that showcased the talents of newcomers as well as community members. A kind of variety show”

“Social events might be helpful (but they’d need to be the kinds of things that naturally bring people together over shared interests and don’t focus on people’s status as ‘newcomers’).”

“Showcasing newcomer traditions in established venues and events - such as Indian dancing at the Highland Arts Theatre, or different ethnic foods at RibFest. It allows both established residents and newcomers to celebrate together, and enjoy something similar yet different.”

“First assessing what their needs/barriers are if any, and then creating more accessible and truly welcoming social and professional opportunities to connect.”

“Engage entire neighborhoods in the development of relationships. When new people/families move into communities we need to actively welcome these folks. And that requires a formal process of introduction whether through social media, churches, active welcoming organizations”

“Joining sports clubs, theatre or community Facebook group”

“English classes. Transportation connections”

“Encourage community based organizations to consider whether they are more a club than a functioning organization with a clear welcoming purpose.”

“We often have events put in by the various ethnic groups in our area in which they showcase their culture, foods and national dress. We also have the ability at these functions to speak to people and learn their heritage. Similar events on a larger scale might be one way to bring immigrants/newcomers and locals together to share their culture. Maybe a showcase of traditional dress, dance and music with booths set up so that people can see things closer and ask questions. Maybe also have traditional foods there to sample as well.”

# Survey Subpopulation Findings

## Newcomer Survey

### Selected Comparisons Between Subpopulations of Newcomer Respondents and Overall Newcomer Survey Responses

	Employment (full-time and part-time)	Self-employment	Volunteerism	Sense of Belonging	Experiences of Discrimination	Satisfaction with Accommodation	Health and Wellness Service Experiences	Use of settlement or language services	Spending time with friends born in Canada
<b>Student Permit Holders</b>	Less likely ( <b>64 per cent vs 70 per cent</b> ) to be employed	Much less likely ( <b>Zero per cent vs seven per cent</b> ) to be self-employed	Somewhat less likely ( <b>38 per cent vs 45 per cent</b> ) to volunteer	Much more likely ( <b>86 per cent vs 70 per cent</b> ) to have a very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging	Less likely ( <b>42 per cent vs 49 per cent</b> ) to have experienced discrimination	Less likely ( <b>68 per cent vs 72 per cent</b> ) to be satisfied and very satisfied with accommodation	Much more likely ( <b>47 per cent vs 32 per cent</b> ) to have an “acceptable” or “poor” experience	Less likely ( <b>Four per cent vs seven per cent</b> ) to use the services	Less likely ( <b>52 per cent vs 70 per cent</b> ) to spend time with friends born in Canada
<b>Respondents living in Inverness, Victoria, Richmond or Port Hawkesbury</b>	Much less likely ( <b>44 per cent vs 70 per cent</b> ) to be employed	Much more likely ( <b>28 per cent vs seven per cent</b> ) to be self-employed	Much more likely ( <b>67 per cent vs 45 per cent</b> ) to volunteer	More likely ( <b>76 per cent vs 70 per cent</b> ) to have a very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging	Somewhat less likely ( <b>47 per cent vs 49 per cent</b> ) to have experienced discrimination	More likely ( <b>83 per cent vs 72 per cent</b> ) to be very satisfied and somewhat satisfied with accommodation	Much less likely ( <b>Eight per cent vs 32 per cent</b> ) to have an “acceptable” or “poor” experience	Much more likely ( <b>13 per cent vs seven per cent</b> ) to use the services	Much more likely ( <b>89 per cent vs 70 per cent</b> ) to spend time with friends born in Canada
<b>Those identifying as female</b>	Much less likely ( <b>62 per cent vs 70 per cent</b> ) to be employed	Much more likely ( <b>12 per cent vs seven per cent</b> ) to be self-employed	Less likely ( <b>41 per cent vs 45 per cent</b> ) to volunteer	Much more likely ( <b>79 per cent vs 70 per cent</b> ) to have a very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging	Much more likely ( <b>59 per cent vs 49 per cent</b> ) to have experienced discrimination	More likely ( <b>82 per cent vs 72 per cent</b> ) to be very satisfied and somewhat satisfied with accommodation	Much more likely ( <b>46 per cent vs 32 per cent</b> ) to have an “acceptable” or “poor” experience	Somewhat more likely ( <b>Nine per cent vs 7 per cent</b> ) to have used these services	Less likely ( <b>66 per cent vs 70 per cent</b> ) to spend time with friends born in Canada
<b>High levels of education (Bachelors or higher)</b>	Somewhat more likely ( <b>72 per cent vs 70 per cent</b> ) to be employed	Just as likely ( <b>7 per cent vs 7 per cent</b> ) to be self-employed	Less likely ( <b>39 per cent vs 45 per cent</b> ) to volunteer	More likely ( <b>87 per cent vs 81 per cent</b> ) to have a very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging	Somewhat more likely ( <b>50 per cent vs 49 per cent</b> ) to have experienced discrimination	Just as likely ( <b>72 per cent vs 72 per cent</b> ) to be satisfied and very satisfied with accommodation	More likely ( <b>37 per cent vs 32 per cent</b> ) to have an “acceptable” or “poor” experience	Somewhat less likely ( <b>6 per cent vs 7 per cent</b> ) to have used the service	Less likely ( <b>64 per cent vs 70 per cent</b> ) to spend time with friends born in Canada
<b>Those with (relatively) low level of English</b>	Much less likely ( <b>13 per cent vs 70 per cent</b> ) to be employed	Much more likely ( <b>13 per cent vs seven per cent</b> ) to be self-employed	Much less likely ( <b>29 per cent vs 45 per cent</b> ) to volunteer	Less likely ( <b>75 per cent vs 81 per cent</b> ) to have a very strong or strong sense of belonging	Less likely ( <b>43 per cent vs 49 per cent</b> ) to have experienced discrimination	More likely ( <b>75 per cent vs 72 per cent</b> ) to be satisfied and very satisfied with accommodation	Less likely ( <b>20 per cent vs 32 per cent</b> ) to have an “acceptable” or “poor” experience	Much more likely ( <b>14 per cent vs seven per cent</b> ) to have used the service	Less likely ( <b>60 per cent vs 70 per cent</b> ) to spend time with friends born in Canada
<b>Recent immigrants (arrived in Canada 5 years or less ago)</b>	Somewhat more likely ( <b>71 per cent vs 70 per cent</b> ) to be employed	Somewhat less likely ( <b>6 per cent vs seven per cent</b> ) to be self-employed	Less likely ( <b>38 per cent vs 45 per cent</b> ) to volunteer	More likely ( <b>84 per cent vs 81 per cent</b> ) to have a very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging	Less likely ( <b>46 per cent vs 49 per cent</b> ) to have experienced discrimination	Somewhat less likely ( <b>69 per cent vs 72 per cent</b> ) to be satisfied and very satisfied with accommodation	More likely ( <b>36 per cent vs 32 per cent</b> ) to have an “acceptable” or “poor” experience	Somewhat less likely ( <b>Six per cent vs seven per cent</b> ) to have used these services	Less likely ( <b>66 per cent vs 70 per cent</b> ) to spend time with friends born in Canada

**Selected Comparisons Between Respondents Living in the Municipalities of the Counties of Inverness, Victoria, Richmond or the Town of Port Hawkesbury and Overall Community Survey Responses**

<b>Have friends who are newcomers</b>	Somewhat less likely (64 per cent vs 66 per cent) to have friends who are newcomers.
<b>Cape Breton is a welcoming place for newcomers</b>	Much less likely (46 per cent vs 59 per cent) to think that Cape Breton-Unama'ki is a welcoming place for newcomers.
<b>Have witnessed discrimination</b>	Somewhat less likely (63 per cent vs 67 per cent) to have witnessed discrimination.
<b>See housing as the most important priority</b>	Much less likely (47 per cent vs 52 per cent) to see housing as the most important priority.



# Focus Groups & Interviews

Focus groups and interviews provided an opportunity for interested participants to engage in a deeper discussion regarding the themes raised in the survey. The following is a summary of those conversations.

## Newcomer Focus Groups

### Settling In & Newcomer Services

Participants were asked to comment on service categories that were most crucial for newcomers settling in and where improvements were most-needed.

Participants focused on three:

- **Housing;**
- **Job search and job retention; and**
- **Transportation.**

On transportation, one participant shared the challenge of:

“having to wait 2 hours in some areas and in others just once every hour, if you miss it you miss work”

On access to information about services available for newcomers, a respondent shared that

“it’s like having to be feeling your way through the dark, don’t know what to Google”

Participants highlighted the importance of finding reliable employment as well as their desire to contribute to their local communities in Cape Breton-Unama'ki.

“As much as people would like to stay here in Cape Breton, if you’re not able to find a job and employers that are open to us, to support us, and encourage us to stay, it becomes very difficult.”

For those newcomers that had the opportunity to build a social network prior to their arrival, they noted how that had been a significant benefit to their settlement experience.

Participants suggested a form of welcome centre (in-person or online) that would offer newcomers guidance regarding tips for settling in and where to access required services.

## Inclusion

In surveys, respondents had highlighted the distinction between welcoming and inclusion. During the focus group discussion, participants were asked to share more about what makes a community inclusive.

On the theme of inclusion, participants often talked about the importance of ‘being heard and being seen’.

“The opportunity to be understood, where we come from, what our culture is, while also being exposed to the local rich experiences to understand their local history and how we can contribute”

To build their sense of belonging, participants repeatedly highlighted the importance of volunteering. They want to

“give back to the community by finding programs that you can volunteer and donate to, build local initiatives to support their causes”



Part of feeling included, participants noted, is the ability to build friendships and learn about others. A participant suggested the creation of an ambassador program in each community:

**“Ambassadors for the community – you can share through photographs, video and tell the story of being in Cape Breton- Unama’ki and becoming a local. To be able to share the experience not just about crossing borders, but the dance between keeping parts of yourself and acclimating to a new community, while receiving parts of them.”**

Although it is important to create local connections, newcomers acknowledge that this can be difficult. They strive to be patient, connect and reassure their new communities they are here to stay.

**“Sometimes it helps opening up to a random stranger and if it’s the right stranger they may be the key for you to feel included and start new friendships!”**

**“If you want to live here, you have to be patient, for the weather, for the schooling, for bureaucracy, but the wait and patience is totally worth it!”**

**“Inclusion can be as simple as just being asked, being extended the opportunity to attend”**

### Community Member Interviews

Individual interviews with established community members brought additional focus to themes of welcoming and inclusion.

Participants said that what connects a person to a community is the feeling that they have added to it and that it is important to support newcomers in this way. It is important to recognize the value of each individual to foster their connection to the community.

**“You don’t know who has arrived, so for it to be welcoming it’s hard to know who is new, and it is hard to know in tourist areas and being used to seeing tourists, but the community may not be used to recognising between who is here for tourism and who is here to stay.”**

**“There is a lot already from the roots of Cape Breton to have the community growing and the sense of togetherness, we want to show people how great it is to be here, and for them to become part of the growing history of Cape Breton.”**

Participants also stressed the importance of education in the community regarding immigration and the value of connecting with children and youth in school. One participant said that the availability of multicultural texts could help educators teach about many cultures.



**“Communities are small enough here that community education could come down to an individual level, having events that may be a bit more formal that pull in arrivals in a social way so that people know about them.”**

**“There are so many culturally relevant events from our local cultures, these are things that are important for us [Cape Bretoners] and others are welcomed and there is room being made for new people to come in. Making space for other cultures and bringing together new arrivals in locally important cultural celebrations.”**

**“What is important for us, let us share it with you, we’d love to have you be part of this and contribute. It is a way to include someone, we want to learn about that, and we want that to be part of us. Being from somewhere else is cherished and important, it can be valued by being included into a “bring a dish and share it!””**

**“Language support for newcomers to be able to communicate and feel comfortable strengthening their English, while also supporting local communities to learn about different accents.”**



Participants said that it is important to acknowledge and celebrate diversity on an ongoing basis, rather than singling out individuals.

**“YMCA open gym basketball – boys that didn’t grow up in the same neighbourhood are all coming together through sport and now they are buddies at school. Those opportunities are especially in Cape Breton and in rural areas.”**

Participants spoke about supporting newcomers while also furthering initiatives that are of broad community value.

**“We need shared goals that are not particularly about immigration! Community projects based on what is needed regardless of where you are from, park clean up, building a community garden, making an effort to extend invitations and include internationals.”**

One participant noted the importance of actively acknowledging pain and generational trauma in the community: the history of industrial Cape Breton and the closures of coal mines and the steel plant. There is pain in seeing your family members still needing to work far away. It is important to acknowledge this aspect while working to foster communities that support youth to stay, those working away to come home, and newcomers to settle here as well.

**“You can’t do it all alone, it is important to recognize you need the support from those around you to thrive.”**

**“It’s not about replacement, it is about enrichment to help everyone, immigration is only one slice of that growth of population.”**

Both newcomers and community members are learning more from one another, and there is great value in having the opportunity to learn and be exposed to the world. The world is here, but we are not losing ourselves, our history or our heritage, we are expanding our history and sharing what is important to us with others.

**“Support community members in keeping the conversation going and sharing of information, so that everyone knows what is happening around services, events, support systems. To improve the support positioning for community members and newcomers, there should be a link reaching out to the organizations and keeping the conversation going, not everyone knows who they need to know.”**

# Opportunities for Improvement

The consultation identified several areas of opportunity to improve newcomer settlement outcomes in Cape Breton-Unama’ki.

1

## **Finding and implementing solutions to newcomer housing challenges**

While 72 per cent of newcomer respondents said they were satisfied with their accommodation, improved access to affordable housing was the top-ranked area of change needed, and identified in both surveys. International students and recent immigrants had lower than average levels of satisfaction and respondents shared the challenges involved in moving between short-term rentals while looking for permanent housing.

The impact of the housing challenge on both attracting and retaining newcomers in Cape Breton-Unama’ki is extremely significant and requires ongoing collaboration between a wide variety of actors in both the private and public sectors. Exploration of best practices, across Canada and beyond, regarding housing solutions for newcomers, particularly in rural and smaller centres, will be helpful in the ongoing identification and implementation of creative solutions.

2

## **Expanding resources to help newcomers find and maintain employment**

While not the sole factor that determines newcomer retention in a community, securing meaningful employment is a critical determinant regarding a decision to stay in Cape Breton-Unama’ki. More than half of newcomer respondents had experienced challenges in finding or maintaining employment since arrival. Nearly half of all respondents were working but were actively looking to change or improve their current job. The majority of respondents had post-secondary education but, if they were working, most were doing so outside of their chosen field.

Ongoing and expanded efforts to provide tailored support to newcomers in terms of job searching, career advice, network building and skills training are imperative. Awareness raising regarding the labour market in Cape Breton-Unama’ki and targeted approaches to match newcomers and employers will continue to be essential moving forward. Finally, employers need additional support and resources to take action to foster more welcoming and inclusive hiring practices and workplaces.

3

## **Improving communication regarding newcomer services**

While overall satisfaction with available services for newcomers was relatively high among survey respondents, there was a lack of awareness of services across several categories. Of particular note were settlement and language services, which only seven per cent of survey respondents had used. This indicates that many newcomers may not be benefitting from the full suite of supports that are available to them. During focus group discussions, participants repeatedly raised challenges around knowing where to find information - or even what information they should be looking for.

Ongoing efforts to improve communication regarding available services are necessary. Information needs to be relevant, up-to-date, comprehensive, and easy to find and navigate. The development of an online information hub for newcomers at [welcometocapebreton.ca](http://welcometocapebreton.ca) is one initiative to help address this challenge. Enhancements to interagency coordination of services are also critical to improving the settlement experience. Additional training for volunteers in the Cape Breton Welcome Network regarding where to direct newcomers to find the services they need and the development and distribution of paper copy directories to complement online resources will help disseminate information further.

4

## Engaging communities and celebrating diversity

Community members clearly indicated a desire to connect more with newcomers. Many were not yet aware of the Cape Breton Welcome Network and the structure it provides to connect local volunteers with newcomers. Ongoing communication and raising awareness about the Network are necessary. The results of this report will be shared with the Welcome Network to help generate additional activity ideas for volunteers.

Ongoing collaboration with municipalities, businesses and other organizations will also be necessary to share ideas regarding actions that can be taken to improve the newcomer experiences - and resources that can help facilitate those actions.

Many respondents also expressed a desire to see more learning opportunities around cultural diversity and more community events and celebrations of multiculturalism.

These celebrations can take a variety of forms, from small daily actions to large-scale events. Sharing ideas like those included in this report and developing resources to assist in community education and celebration should be ongoing efforts.

5

## Committing to ongoing anti-discrimination work

Nearly half of newcomer respondents had experienced some form of discrimination since arriving in Cape Breton-Unama'ki. Most often, this discrimination was associated with ethnicity, culture, race or skin colour. Sixty-seven per cent of community respondents said that they had witnessed discrimination in the community. It was most commonly reported that discrimination took place in a store, bank, or restaurant. Systemic change is required. Ongoing training, education and action is needed at individual and organizational levels to combat discrimination in all of its forms.

# Next Steps for the CBLIP

The preparation of this report does not mark the end of this process. It is the task of the CBLIP to ensure that the results of the report are shared widely, in particular with those partners whose work it may help to inform. By providing further insights into the newcomer experience in Cape Breton-Unama'ki, it is hoped that local organizations, community members and decision-makers may be better equipped in their efforts to support newcomers. The CBLIP will continue to synthesize the information in this report and to share it with those who may translate it into concrete action. Anyone interested in aspects of the data not presented in this report is encouraged to connect with the CBLIP in case additional insights can be offered.

For the CBLIP itself, there are several areas of current work whose importance has been highlighted. In particular, it has been heard loud and clear that it is essential to continue efforts to improve the coordination of services and to make it easier for newcomers to find the resources they need. It is also critical for the CBLIP to continue to support the Cape Breton Welcome Network in its work to increase the capacity of local community volunteers to welcome newcomers across Cape Breton-Unama'ki.

## CBLIP Strategic Plan (2023-2025)

The CBLIP is currently working under its Strategic Plan (2019-2022). The present plan includes four key priority areas:

- Raising awareness of the needs of newcomers and the benefits of immigration;
- Fostering welcoming communities;
- Improving coordination of newcomer services; and
- Supporting community-level research and planning.

These priorities will continue to guide the CBLIP in the short-term.

The results gathered through this consultation will help to inform the next CBLIP Strategic Plan (2023-2025). In developing this next strategic plan, the CBLIP Council will tailor its efforts to best incorporate the priorities that have been voiced by the community. The new Strategic Plan will be presented to the community in early 2023.

## Ongoing Consultation

The CBLIP understands that the trends, challenges and priorities described above will change over time and is committed to ongoing community consultation. Every second year, the CBLIP will reconnect with the community through a process similar to the above and, in doing so, will continue to ensure that its work is reflective of the needs and opportunities described by the community, and newcomers in particular. The next consultation process will take place in 2022-2023.

## Appreciation

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For making this community consultation possible and meaningful - thank you.



# Contact

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For information and resources related to COVID-19, please visit the Cape Breton Partnership's COVID-19 Resource Page at:  
**[capebretonpartnership.com/covid-19-resources](https://capebretonpartnership.com/covid-19-resources)**

To learn more about the Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership, please visit:  
**[www.newtcapebreton.com](http://www.newtcapebreton.com)**



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