

2023 - 2024



Understanding Workforce Attraction & Retention Executive Summary

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and thank our Advisory Committee partners for their support and contributions to this project.

An up-to-date analysis of trends of the in and out migration of our workforce provides valuable information about how balanced our workforce attraction and retention is in the Region. This data will support employers and community stakeholders in their strategies to attract and retain the workforce we need for our communities to thrive and grow.

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Executive Summary

The Stratford-Bruce Peninsula Economic Region (the Region) has one of the lowest unemployment rates in Ontario along with high job vacancies. Due to an aging population; the Region's labour force participation rate has also declined significantly. This has negatively affected the pool of workers available to fill vacancies in many sectors; making attracting and retaining residents to the Region crucial to maintaining and growing the labour force.

The purpose of this project is to gain an understanding of the Region's ability to attract and retain the working age population. The project focused on the number of people (i.e. migrants) aged 15 years and over who moved in and out of the Region between 2016 and 2020. The research incorporated an analysis of migrant occupations, as this provides insight into the skill sets the Region have gained or lost. Due to the aging population, an examination of migrants by age cohorts was also included.

When appropriate, comparisons to the 2011 to 2015 period were made. In addition, residents who moved between Bruce, Grey, Huron and Perth County but stayed in the Region were examined to explore retention and labour movement within the Region.

The report examines two types of migrants:

Internal migrants – refer to people who moved (migrated) to Stratford-Bruce Peninsula Economic Region from other communities in Canada; or people who moved out of the Region to other areas in Canada.

External migrants (immigrants) - refer to people who moved to Stratford-Bruce from outside of Canada. However, data on those who left the Region for another country was not available.

Key Findings:

Internal Migrants

- Between 2016 and 2020, 40,670 internal migrants aged 15 years and over moved to the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula Economic Region whereas far fewer 23,625 people left. This brought a net gain of 17,045 people to the Region. As a result, 16.8 % of the Region's residents aged 15 years and older settled here between 2016 and 2020
- Overall, internal migrants had higher labour force participation rates than the regional population.
- 52.6% who moved to the Region were 25 to 44 years of age, suggesting a windfall gain in the labour supply as this cohort has high labour force participation rate and can be expected to work for many years.
- Between 2016 and 2020 there was a net growth of internal migrants aged 15 to 24 years, a significant improvement from the loss in the 2011 to 2015 period.
- Major occupations of internal migrants were: Sales and service occupations, Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations, Business, finance and administration. Notably, major gains among 15 to 24 years were in manufacturing and utilities, whereas the largest share of the 25 to 44 years cohort participated in Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations which are in demand.
- Compared to the Region, a higher percentage of internal migrants aged 25 to 44 years participated in higher skilled occupations in TEER 0 to TEER 2 occupations.¹
- About 7,645 people (24.4% of all movers from the four counties) remained in the Region (i.e. moved between Bruce, Grey, Huron and Perth County). And about 39.6% of these people were 25 to 44 years of age.



¹ TEER 0 to TEER 2 occupations defined under National Occupation Classification (NOC 2021), (i.e. management, professional, supervisory and occupations in trades that require 2 years and more apprenticeship training).

External Migrants (Immigrants)

- Between 2016 and 2020, 2,835 immigrants were attracted to the Region.
- Immigrants attracted to the Region increased by 33.3% when compared to 2011 to 2015 period. Increases in younger cohorts: 15 to 24 (+25.7%) and 25 to 34 years (+117.5%) were also observed.
- Immigrants had higher labour force participation rates than the Regional average. However, those with apprenticeship or trades certificates had lower participation rates than the Region.
- There was a significant gender gap in participation of immigrants: 82% in male versus 62% in female. As a Region, our overall male participation rate was 9.5% points higher than female.
- Major occupations of immigrants were sales and services, manufacturing and utilities, natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations.
- Manufacturing and utilities occupations saw a significant growth in immigrant participation. However, we noted decreases in Trades, transport and equipment operators and health occupations.



Key Findings Internal Migrants by County (2016-2021)

Bruce – Overall, there was a labour force net gain of 2,540 people. Bruce saw a net gains from those aged 15 to 24 years. In particular, Health occupations were top occupations among the 15 to 24 and 45 to 54 years cohorts. Also, residents moved out from the Bruce County were more likely remained living and working in the Region (32.1%).

Grey – Overall, there was a labour force net gain of 4,770 people. Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations experienced the biggest gain, in particular from those 25 to 44 years aged.

Huron – Overall, there was a labour force net gain of 820 people. Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations had the 2nd largest number of gains among all. We were particularly excited to learn that manufacturing and utilities occupations had major gains from the 25 to 44 years cohort.

Perth – Overall, there was a labour force net gain of 2,325 people, in particular in Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations and manufacturing and utilities. It was also encouraging that the 15 to 24 years cohort saw net gains in Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations as well as manufacturing and utilities.

Closing Remarks

This project has provided a comprehensive analysis of workforce migration trends in the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula Economic Region. The key observations outlined in this Executive Summary have revealed positive gains in the Region's ability to maintain and grow the local workforce.

We believe that the valuable information gathered will support the continuous efforts of local stakeholders in attracting and retaining the workforce we need for our communities to thrive and grow. Further analysis of the migration trends at Regional and county levels are presented in the full Observations Report.



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