

Engaging newcomers in a housing research project in a rural context



Lessons from the 2024 *Newcomer experiences
of housing in Huron Perth* research study

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Our context

- 5 towns, 5 villages, dozens of hamlets. Largest community is 10,000 people.
- 7% of population are immigrants.
- Strengths: Volunteerism, agriculture, low unemployment.
- Gaps: Dedicated settlement services, public transportation.



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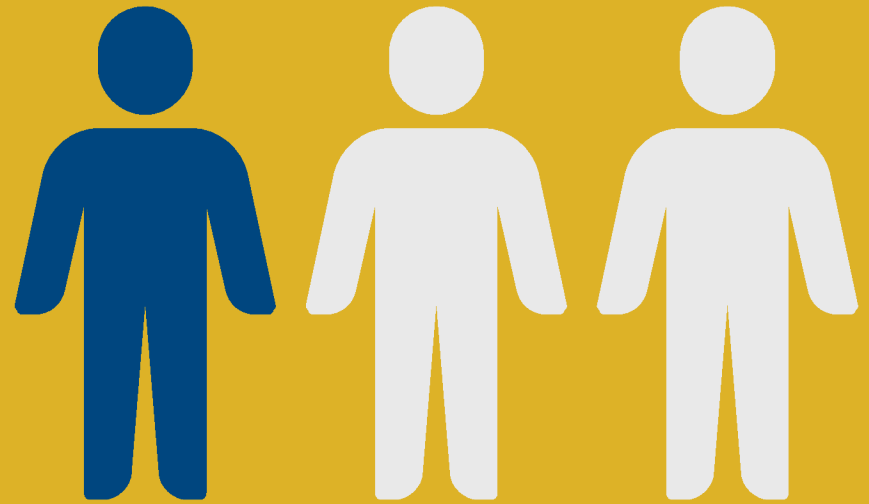
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Affordable housing is an expressed need

- Newcomers highlighted that finding affordable housing was a continuous challenge in local data
 - Immigrant survey
- Is the information available elsewhere that can be applied to help understand the problem?
 - Lit review



29% of the 195 respondents to the 2023 Huron Perth Immigrant Survey was one of the biggest challenges they faced in the past year.



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Gathered partners & consulted

- Restarted Working Group:
Found organizations with a shared interest in the topic.
Added organizations that work directly with newcomers.
- What information did those vested parties need to know?
 - Included in research questions.



8 organizations/service providers joined our Research Working Group dedicated to this study.



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Research project design & feedback

- Drafted recruitment strategy, inclusion & exclusion criteria, research questions, analysis and dissemination of research plan.
 - Focus group.
- Identified & sought honourariums.
- Returned to Research Working Group.



Additional funding of \$2,000 was solicited and received from 3 organizations to provide \$50 grocery store gift cards to each participant.



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Complete ethics approval process

- Added credibility. Ensured unintentional potential harm is identified, addressed.
- Focused on the entirety of the project. Made us consider what we might have overlooked.
- Made results defensible.



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Organized logistics.

Supported partners to recruit.

- Organized logistics.
- Developed recruitment materials.
- Hosted another meeting with research working group.
 - Shared information about logistics. Provided copies of recruitment materials. Answered questions.



Focus group sessions were organized at 5 library branches that spanned the corners of our geographic region and a central area.



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Launched recruitment.

- Reviewed sign-ups daily.
- Followed-up and invited as soon as possible

*Be prepared for no shows and pop-up participants.



Home Sweet Home?

Take part in a 75 minute group discussion. Receive a **\$50 grocery store gift card** for your participation

Newcomers to Canada:
Share your experiences of finding a place to live in our community

*Participation is voluntary.
Fill out an informed consent form to take part.*

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Logos: Huron County, Perth County, Ontario-Canada, City of North Perth, Canadian flag.

Initially, 279 people signed up to participate in the study through the online form. A total of 69 met eligibility criteria and were invited to attend.



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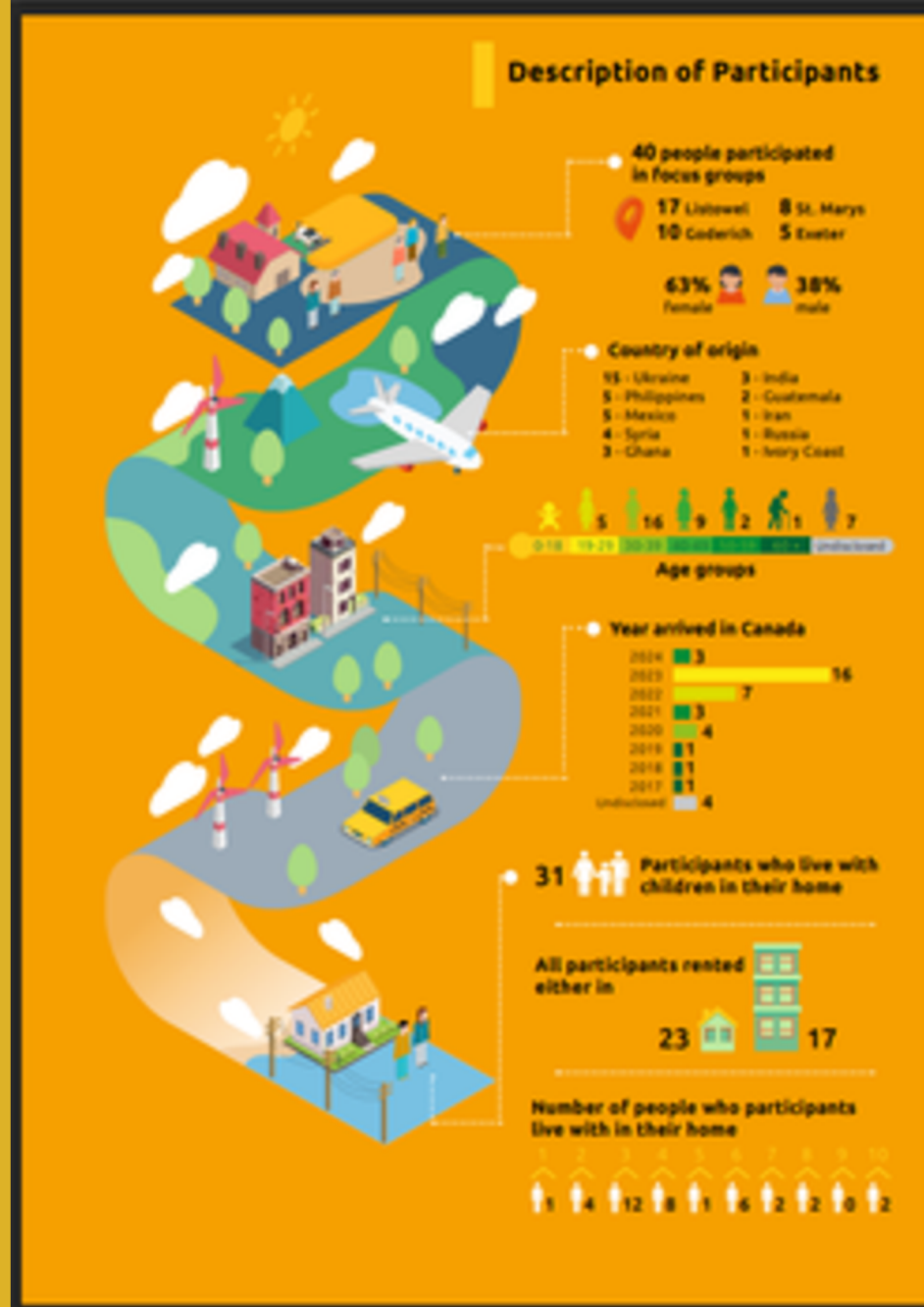


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Conducted the research

- Ensured translators could assist.
- Took notes and recorded. Sometimes multiple people speak at once.
- Issued honourariums at the end.



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Analyzed data collected, identified patterns

- Transcribed.
- Looked for repeated themes across multiple sites.
- Answered each of the main research questions.



Our research project identified 10 key themes related to housing affordability, adequacy, and accessibility. It also highlighted housing information barriers and how housing impacts community connections.



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Drafted report & shared summary draft with research working group

- Completed draft.
- Shared findings in a preview presentation with Research Working Group. Sought input about areas that are confusing, required additional information.



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Published final report. Shared findings.

- Presented findings to local government, service providers, at local housing forums.



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Brainstormed solutions

- Sought input from partners.
- Invited participants from research to brainstorming sessions.
 - Feedback on findings.
 - Solutions through brainstorming.
 - Prioritization of solutions.



24 participants joined 4 community brainstorming conversations, enabling 40 ideas to be generated.



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Shared results with Research Working Group

- Identified what's feasible.
- Helped find examples of where it's done elsewhere.
Suggested to use as case studies.
- Drafted a second report with solutions and case studies.



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Next steps

- Finalize solutions report.
- Present. Seek action.
- Create housing information resource.
- Consider transforming research working group into housing working group.



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Final thoughts

- The value of this approach.
- Challenges of approach.
- What we would do differently.



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