



Citizenship and  
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et  
Immigration Canada

# Portrait of an Integration Process

Difficulties encountered and resources relied on for  
newcomers in their first 4 years in Canada

Evidence from three waves of the Longitudinal Survey of  
Immigrants to Canada (LSIC)

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Canada

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## Background

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The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) is the first national longitudinal survey conducted with the recent immigrant population since the 1970s. The survey is designed to study how newly arrived immigrants adjust to life in Canada during their first four years. Information collected within LSIC improves upon current data to assess integration experiences, such as the Census and the Immigration Data Base (IMDB), by including longitudinal information, identifying immigrants by immigration category, and by capturing information that moves beyond the economic to include the social and cultural aspects of integration – information critical to understanding the determinants of immigrant integration outcomes.

The LSIC is a “longitudinal” survey – that is, the same respondents are interviewed at each wave. The sample was selected from the population of immigrants 15 years of age and over who landed from abroad between October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000 and September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2001. There was only one participant from each family unit. The interviews took place at six months, two years and four years after landing in Canada. 12,000 individuals took part in Wave 1, 9,300 of them participated in the Wave 2 interview, and 7,700 had taken the Wave 3 interview. The final sample represents 157,600 immigrants of the above mentioned population. By interviewing the same people over time, the LSIC information provides a dynamic picture of the experiences of these newcomers, rather than a static “snapshot”.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For more details about the LSIC sample design, use of weights, non-response adjustments and imputation, please refer to the [Microdata User Guide — Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada — Wave 3](#).

## Introduction

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While public interest in immigrant integration has encouraged increased research that looks at a wide range of immigrant outcomes, there exists a need for information on immigrant integration, particularly the timing of stages in the settlement and integration process, the factors affecting integration outcomes and the services used or needed by immigrants to facilitate the process. With the completion of the LSIC, it will be possible to create a portrait of the integration process during the first four years after arrival.

This study examines the progressive process of the LSIC immigrants during the initial settlement and integrating period, with a focus on the barriers new immigrants experienced and resources they relied on in the first 4 years in Canada. Four key areas of settlement and integration are explored including: finding employment, getting education, accessing health care and finding housing. The paper tries to identify core integration barriers and possible sources of assistance for these hurdles. Challenges to assimilation process are also examined in terms of unmet needs in the key integration tasks over time. The paper draws on the advantages of the LSIC, by examining the dynamics of the integration process. Special attention is given to the progressive nature of the initial 4 years for immigrants.

## Overview

As time went on, fewer newcomers needed to focus on three of the four integration tasks examined here (Table 1). During the initial 6 months, 66% or 104,100 of all the LSIC immigrants had tried to get education or training which was the smallest proportion among the four main integration activities. By the 4<sup>th</sup> year in Canada, only 24% or 38,200 reported engaging in accessing education or training. The number of immigrants participating in the other settlement and integration activities such as obtaining employment and finding housing also dropped substantially. Accessing health care services was the only area where immigrants' behaviour was consistent (more than 70% throughout three waves).

Declined involvement implies progress made by newcomers towards a more stable life. The longer immigrants were in Canada, more immigrants appeared to be settled, had secured employment, and fewer were taking education, resulting in smaller engagement proportions in the settlement and integration activities.

**Table 1: Involvement in four main settlement and integration tasks in the first 4 years in Canada**

	6 months after landing	2 years after landing	4 years after landing
<b>All immigrants</b>	<b>157615</b>	<b>157615</b>	<b>157615</b>
Immigrants w ho tried to find employment	112841	91512	77328
	72%	58%	49%
Immigrants w ho accessed education or training <sup>1,2</sup>	104080	46343	38246
	66%	29%	24%
Immigrants w ho accessed health care services <sup>3</sup>	119631	114794	113631
	76%	73%	72%
Immigrants w ho tried to find housing	120707	84686	67516
	77%	54%	43%

<sup>1</sup> The coverages were different in the 3 waves. Education or training included language training in the Wave1 questionnaire while excluding language training in the Wave 2 and 3 questionnaires.

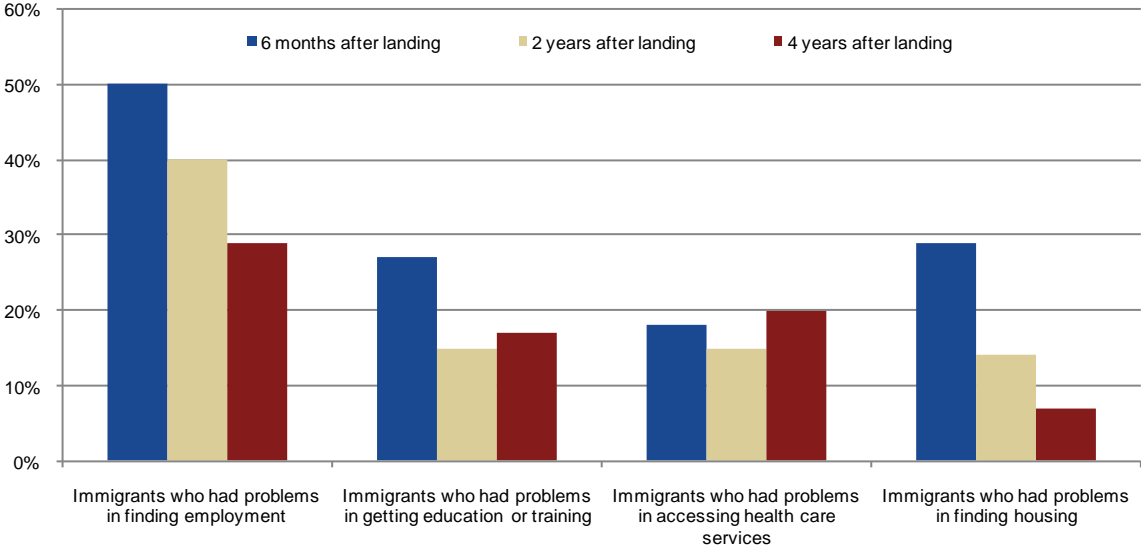
<sup>2</sup> In the Wave 1 questionnaire, the LR is asked if he/she has tried to get education or training. Here reported number for Wave 1 (6 months after landing) is of the LRs w ho tried (may get or may not get) to get education or training in Wave 3, instead of those w ho actually took education.

<sup>3</sup> In the Wave 1 questionnaire, the LR is asked if he/she has tried to get health care services. Here reported number for Wave 1 (6 months after landing) is of the LRs w ho tried (may get or may not get) to get health care services in Wave 3, instead of those w ho actually got health care services.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005

Looking at these four key areas of settlement and the subsequent decrease in reported problems, it appeared that the LSIC immigrants made progress adapting to the new life 4 years after arrival. As shown by Figure 1, for most integration tasks, newcomers were less likely to report difficulties the longer they were in Canada. The proportion of immigrants reporting problems finding employment declined steadily, from 50% at 6 months after landing to 40% at 2 years after arrival and further to 29% at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> year in Canada. Similar progress was evident in problems reported finding housing (29%, 14% and 7% for the interview times of three waves respectively). Although there were variations in the over-time change of incidence of encountering problems in the areas of accessing education or training and health care services, there was still a better cross-time picture in terms of fewer people reporting difficulties.

Figure 1: Presence of problems in the four integration tasks in the first 4 years



Based on all LSIC immigrants.  
Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005.



## Finding Employment

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According to a study by Picot, Hou and Coulombe (2007)<sup>2</sup>, it was concluded that recent immigrants who landed during 1990s had experienced deteriorating economic outcomes. Some immigrants face disadvantages in the labour market, especially newly arrived immigrants, as they lack contacts, knowledge and information of the host country labour market. During the initial four years, finding employment was the most critical challenge for the LSIC immigrants, which was indicated by the highest percentage encountering problems among the four main settlement and integration tasks in each wave (Table 1). How do the LSIC immigrants adapt to, and integrate into the Canadian labour market? The completion of all three waves draws a dynamic picture of this process.

### Employment rate closer to Canadian average

Six months after their arrival, over 7 in 10 (72%) of the 157,600 LSIC immigrants had tried to find jobs. Two years after landing, 58% or 91,500 newcomers had looked for employment. Four years after arrival, the number dropped to 49% or 77,300 (Table 1). The declining trend of immigrants looking for jobs suggests improved employment status over time. As more immigrants secured jobs and were satisfied with current jobs, fewer continued to look for work. The employment to population ratio<sup>3</sup> for all LSIC immigrants increased from 45% at 6 months after landing to 59% at two years and 68% at 4 years after arrival. This rate caught up with and surpassed the Canadian average employment rate of 62.7% in 2005.<sup>4</sup>

However, the unemployment rate of 19% at 4 years after landing, though reduced compared to 37% at 6 months after arrival and 28% at 24 months after arrival, was much higher than the Canadian average rate of 6.8% in 2005.<sup>5</sup> This result implies that in spite of substantial gains in terms of increased employment, new immigrants still faced challenges in finding employment.

### Skilled workers were most likely to encounter labour market barriers

Among those who looked for employment, a large number of immigrants reported difficulties finding employment during the first 4 years in Canada. Six months after arrival, 78,600 or 70% immigrants had reported at least one problem finding employment, and two years after landing, 62,700 or 69% reported problems, while four years after arrival, the number dropped to 45,900 (59%). While this trend indicated moderate progress in the labour market, it differed by immigration category (Figure 2).

Skilled workers, both principal applicants and spouses and dependants, were most likely to report problems finding employment across all the three waves. However, there was a continuous decrease in proportions reporting difficulties in entering labour market for this group as time went on. Family class immigrants, other economic newcomers and refugees were less likely to report problems finding employment and the proportion encountering difficulties remained fairly consistent across three waves compared with skilled workers.

In spite of their labour market skills and higher employment rate, skilled workers were the group most prone to labour market barriers. If we look at the types of problems in finding employment, we may find some answers to this puzzle.

Of newcomers who had tried to look for jobs, the proportion reporting problems in finding employment increased with age. During the period between 24 months and 48 months following their landing, immigrants aged 15 to 24 years were less likely to encounter obstacles in entering labour

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<sup>2</sup> Picot, G., Hou, F., and Coulombe, S., 2007, "Chronic low-income and low-income dynamics among recent immigrants", *Analytical Studies Research Paper Series*, No. 294, Statistics Canada.

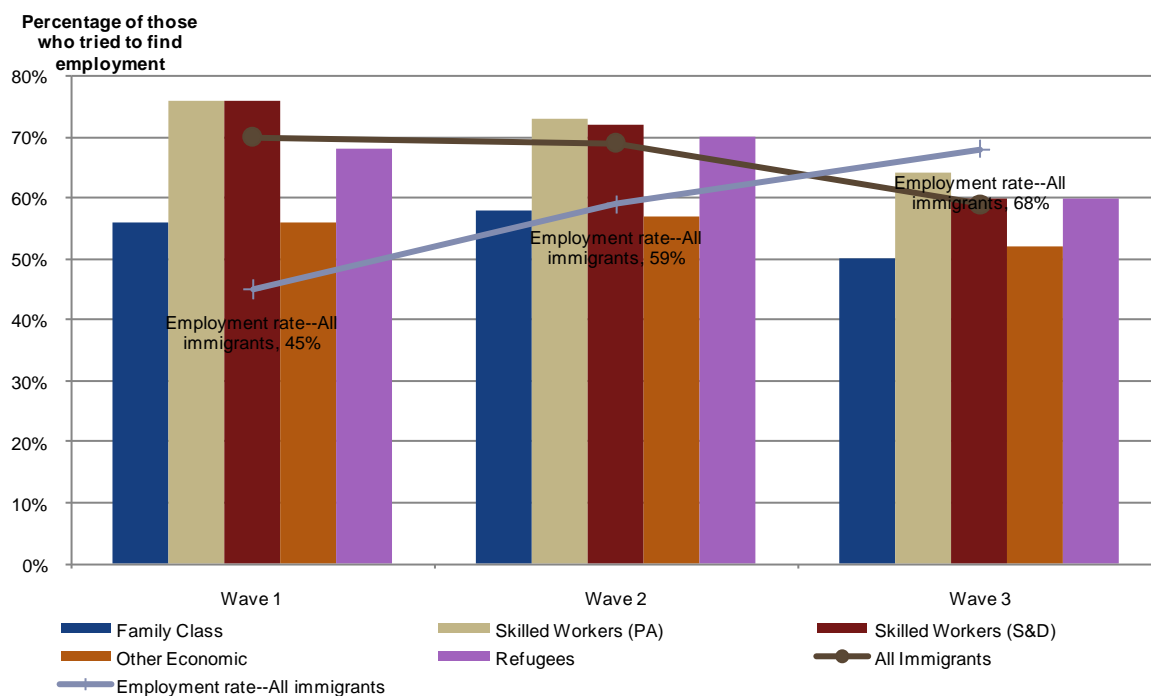
<sup>3</sup> For detailed labour force statistics of the LSIC immigrants, see Appendix.

<sup>4</sup> Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM, tables 282-0002 and 282-0022 and Catalogue no. 71F0004XCB.

<sup>5</sup> Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM, tables 282-0002 and 282-0022 and Catalogue no. 71F0004XCB.

market (48%) compared to their senior counterparts (61% for immigrants at 25 to 44 years and 66% for immigrants at 45 years and over). The combination of flexibility for employment, different perception of what constitutes a “good job” and better adaptation to the new labour market may explain the lower incidence rate of encountering employment barriers for younger labour market participants.

**Figure 2: Encountered difficulties finding employment by immigration category – Wave 1, 2, and 3**



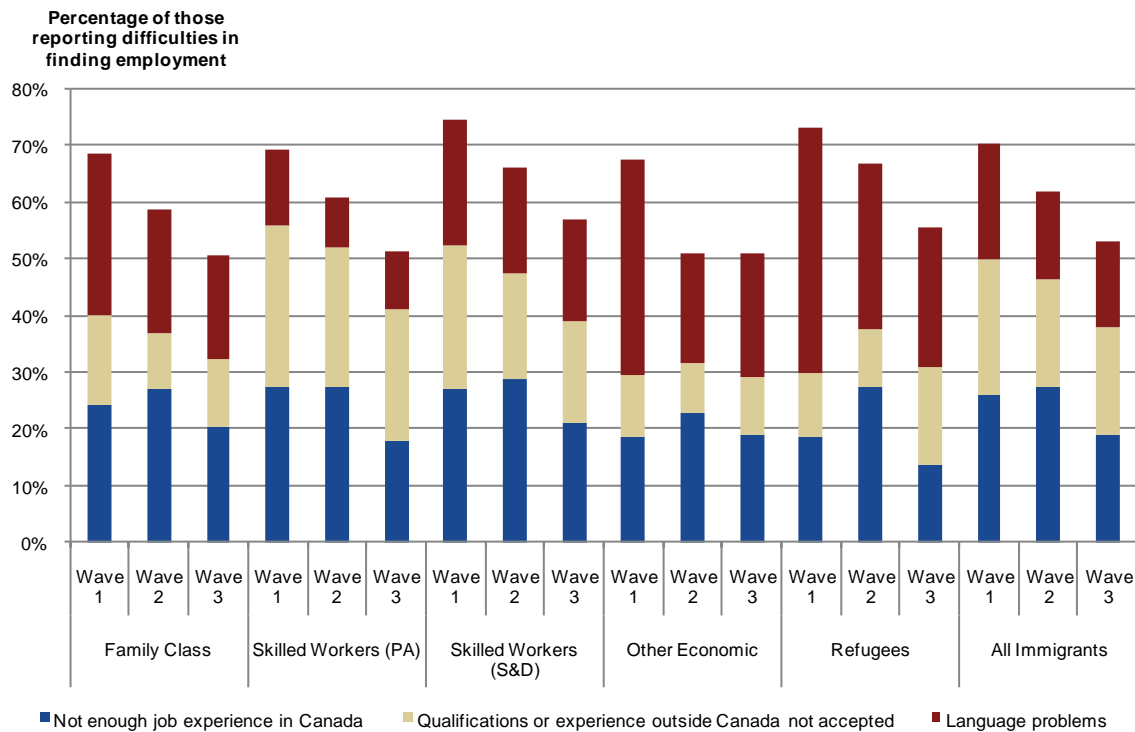
Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005.

## Recognition of foreign qualifications or experience was critical, especially for skilled workers

For all LSIC immigrants, the lack of Canadian work experience, foreign credential recognition and language problems were among the most serious problems reported in finding employment throughout the initial 4 years in Canada (Figure 3). However, problems relating to the recognition of foreign qualifications or experience were particularly serious for skilled workers, especially for skilled worker principal applicants. By the fourth year in Canada, this problem had become the most pronounced barrier (23%) for this group.

Younger newcomers aged 15 to 24 years cited a lack of Canadian work experience (30%) and a shortage of employment opportunities (21%) as the most serious problems in finding work, while those in prime working age (25 to 44 years) reported foreign credential recognition (20%) and lack of Canadian experience (19%) as the top 2 most serious problems when finding jobs. For immigrants aged at 45 years and over, foreign credential recognition (21%) and language problems (18%) were problematic in seeking employment.

**Figure 3: Top 3 problems in finding employment by immigration category – Wave 1, 2, and 3**



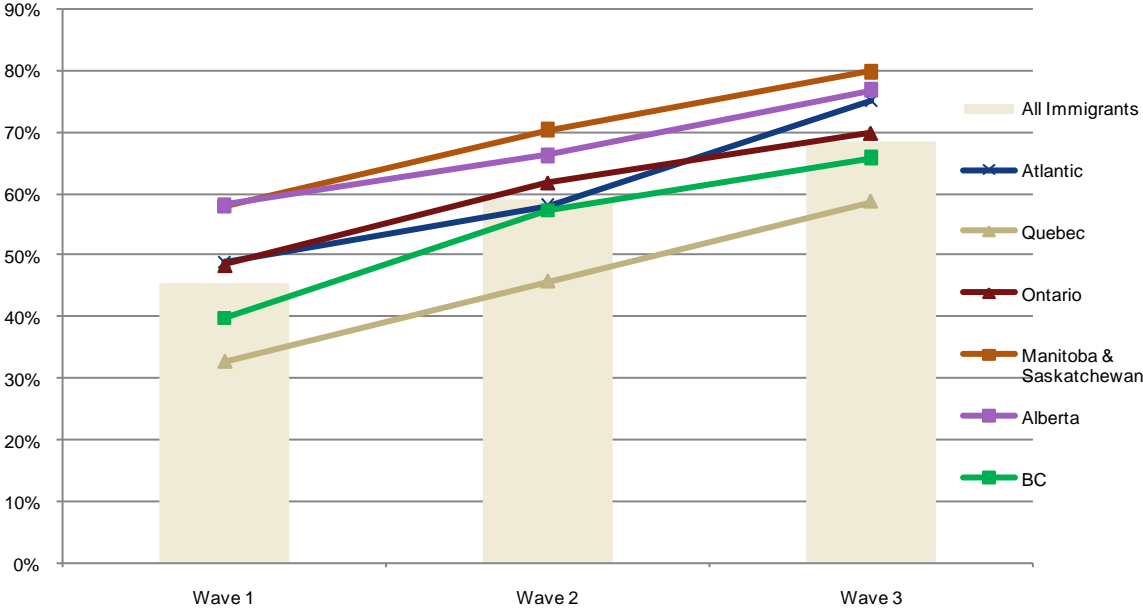
Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005.

Although the proportion of immigrants reporting language as an obstacle in entering labour market decreased over time for almost all immigration categories, lack of knowledge of one of Canada’s official languages was still the most serious problem faced by refugees and other economic immigrants 4 years after landing (25% and 22%, respectively).

### Newcomers in Quebec faced greater obstacles while those in Prairies fared better in the labour market

Newcomers living in Quebec faced greater obstacles in the labour market. As shown in Figure 4, employment to population ratio of the immigrants in the province of Quebec was the lowest among all the provinces at three different points in time. The employment rate in British Columbia was below-average throughout the initial 4 years. In contrast, immigrants in the Prairie Provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta) continued to fare better than their counterparts in any other province. The proportion of immigrants encountering difficulties in entering labour market showed a consistent distribution with the employment rate. During the period 2 years to 4 years after landing, of those who had looked for jobs, immigrants in Quebec (61%), Ontario (64%) and British Columbia (53%) were more likely to report encountering barriers in finding jobs. Examining the most serious problem reported finding employment by provinces, language problems and foreign credential recognition ranked as the top 2 difficulties for immigrants in Quebec. The differences among provinces reflect local economic and labour market conditions in the specific regions during this period.

**Figure 4: Employment rate by province of residence – Wave 1, 2, and 3**



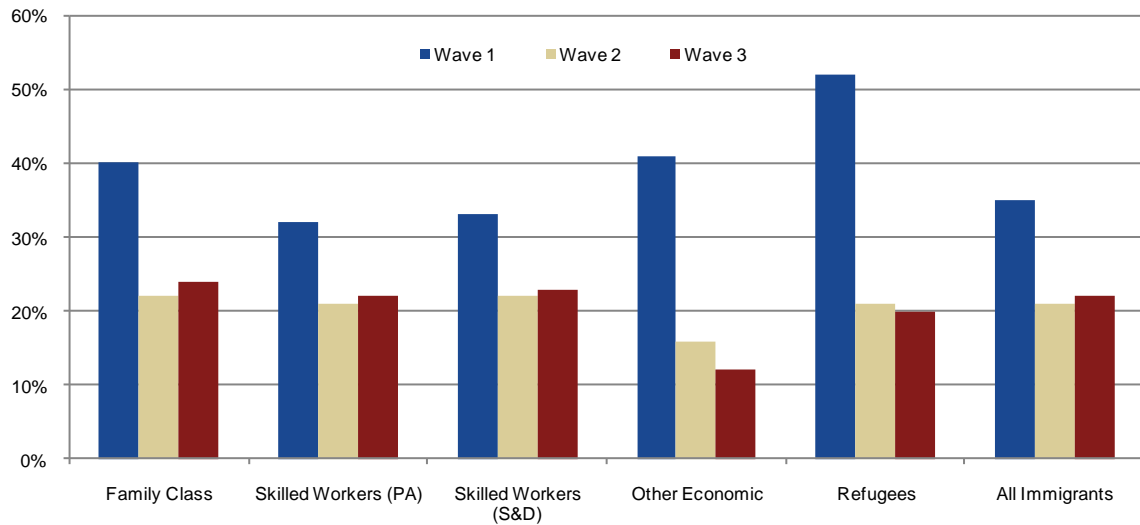
Atlantic provinces include New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador  
 Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005.

**Immigrants were more likely to receive help in the first six months**

More than 1 in 5 newcomers who encountered labour market problems asked for some sort of help for the most serious problem in finding employment at 4 years after landing (Figure 4).<sup>6</sup> We found that newcomers were more likely to receive help in the first 6 months in Canada. Overall, 35% of immigrants received assistance for employment problems during the initial interview period and this share fell to 21% in Wave 2 and 22% in Wave 3. Refugees and immigrants who landed in the other economic class, showed dramatic decreases in the percentages receiving help from 6 months to 2 years after landing (from 41% to 16% for refugees and from 52% and 21% for other economic class).

<sup>6</sup> Source question was changed substantially in the Wave 3 questionnaire. Instead of asked about whether the LR *received* help for the most serious problem in finding employment (as the case in the previous two waves), the question was asked about whether the LR *asked for* help for the most serious problem in finding employment.

**Figure 5: Received help for the most serious problem in finding employment, by immigration category – Wave 1, 2, and 3**



Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005.

### Social networks continued to play an important role in assisting immigrants overcoming labour market barriers

Social capital played an important role in assisting the LSIC immigrants participate in the labour market. Friendship networks were the most important resource on which newcomers relied for employment problems all through the first 4 years in Canada (Table 2), particularly for economic immigrants (Skilled worker principal applicants and spouse and dependants, and other economic categories). It is not surprising to see that relatives and family members were the main source of assistance for family class immigrants, given the presence of kinship network upon arrival for this group. Refugees tended to rely on family and immigration agencies in the initial months (37% and 23% respectively at 6 months after landing), and as time went on, friendship became the main sources of help for them (39% and 32%, 2 years after landing and 4 years after landing, respectively).

It is worth noting that the role of government agencies in helping newcomers enter the labour market appeared more important as time went by. At 4 years after landing, government agencies had become the second most reported source of assistance for all LSIC immigrants (22%) while at 6 months after arrival, only 11% of newcomers received help from government agencies.

Table 2: Sources of help for the most serious problem finding employment by immigration category

	Immigration Category					All Immigrants <sup>2</sup>
	Family Class	Skilled Workers (PA)	Skilled Workers (S&D)	Other Economic	Refugees	
<b><u>Immigrants who received help for the most serious problem finding employment Wave 1</u></b>	<b>5919</b>	<b>12136</b>	<b>6573</b>	<b>1121</b>	<b>1583</b>	<b>27443</b>
<b>Selected sources of help_Wave 1</b>						
Friend	26%	44%	33%	51%	17%	36%
Relative/family member	58%	13%	18%	31%	37%	26%
School	14% <sup>E</sup>	17%	22%	17%	20%	18%
Immigrant agency	6% <sup>E</sup>	14%	13%	6% <sup>E</sup>	23%	12%
Government agency	5% <sup>E</sup>	16%	11%	F	F	11%
<b><u>Immigrants who received help for the most serious problem finding employment Wave 2</u></b>	<b>2580</b>	<b>5881</b>	<b>3645</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>13437</b>
<b>Selected sources of help_Wave 2</b>						
Friend	29% <sup>E</sup>	36%	36%	64%	39%	36%
School	16% <sup>E</sup>	22%	21% <sup>E</sup>	F	18% <sup>E</sup>	20%
Government agency	15% <sup>E</sup>	24%	18% <sup>E</sup>	F	13% <sup>E</sup>	19%
Relative/family member	32% <sup>E</sup>	6% <sup>E</sup>	12% <sup>E</sup>	F	F	14%
<b><u>Immigrants who asked for help for the most serious problem finding employment Wave 3<sup>1</sup></u></b>	<b>1947</b>	<b>4396</b>	<b>2865</b>	<b>211<sup>E</sup></b>	<b>602</b>	<b>10048</b>
<b>Selected sources of help_Wave 3</b>						
Friend	41% <sup>E</sup>	43%	37%	F	32% <sup>E</sup>	41%
Government agency	24% <sup>E</sup>	22% <sup>E</sup>	22% <sup>E</sup>	F	28% <sup>E</sup>	22%
School	9% <sup>E</sup>	18% <sup>E</sup>	18% <sup>E</sup>	F	F	16%
Relative/family member	17% <sup>E</sup>	F	14% <sup>E</sup>	F	F	11%

<sup>1</sup>Source question was changed substantially in the Wave 3 questionnaire. Instead of asked about whether the LR received help for the most serious problem in finding employment, the question was asked about whether the LR asked for the most serious problem in finding employment

<sup>2</sup>All immigrants include a small number of immigrants who landed in the categories not mentioned in the table.

<sup>E</sup> Use with caution.

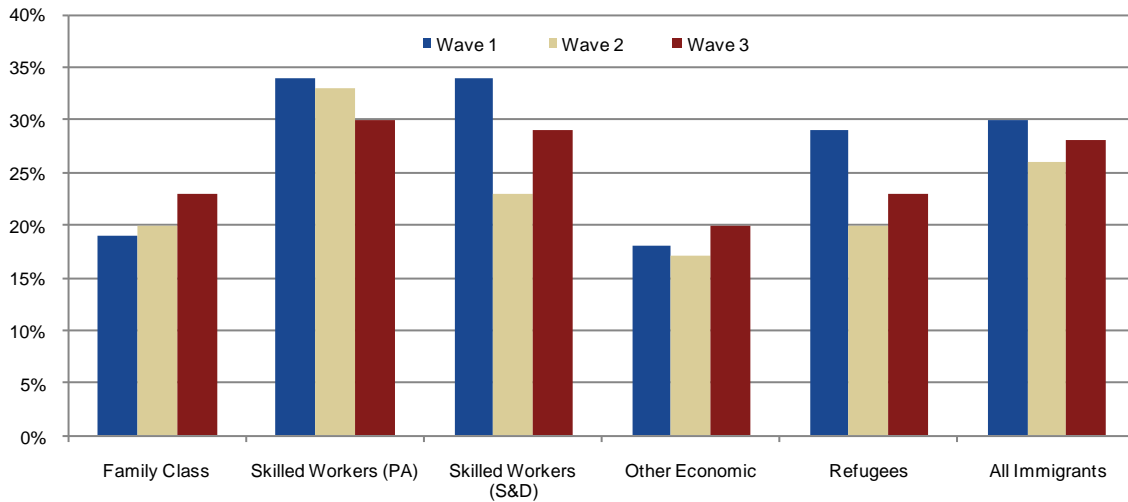
F Too unreliable to be released.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005.

## Approximately 3 in 10 immigrants reported not receiving assistance needed for problems finding employment throughout the first 4 years

Among the newcomers who encountered difficulties in finding employment, quite a number of immigrants reported that they had not received help needed for the most serious problem. The proportion across waves was quite stable: 30% at 6 months after landing, 26% at 2 years, and 28% at 4 years after arrival. Skilled workers, both principal applicants and spouse and dependents, were more likely to report having unmet needs. Surprisingly as time went on, more family class immigrants reported needing but not receiving help (19% at 6 months after landing, 20% at 2 years after arrival, and 23% at 4 years after landing), which is contrary to the decreasing trend of reporting unmet needs for all the other immigration categories.

**Figure 6: Immigrants who did not receive help needed for the most serious problem in finding employment, by immigration category – Wave 1, 2, and 3**



Based on the number of immigrants who reported difficulties in finding employment in each wave.  
 Source: *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005.*

### Information and advice were most needed when entering labour market while the need for work-related training emerged over time

Information on local labour market opportunities and advice were the most urgent needs that the LSIC immigrants required in their initial labour market integration process (Table 3). These two types of needs were the most frequently cited assistance needed throughout three waves. By the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> year in Canada, 37% and 27% of immigrants reported needing information and advice respectively. Another notable trend is that as time went by, the needs of work related training became more and more important for the LSIC immigrants as a whole, especially during the period from 2 years after landing to 4 years after arrival (proportion changed substantially from 7% at 2 years after landing to 31% 2 years later).

Over half (52%) of immigrants aged 15 to 24 years old reporting unmet needs cited information help as the assistance needed but not received, while 32% of those in prime working age (25 to 44 years) expressed the need for work-related training.

**Table 3: Selected types of help needed for the most serious problem in finding employment by immigration category**

Selected types of unmet needs	Immigration Category					All Immigrants <sup>1</sup>
	Family Class	Skilled Workers (PA)	Skilled Workers (S&D)	Other Economic Refugees		
<b><u>Immigrants who did not get help needed for the most serious problem in finding employment --- Wave 1</u></b>	<b>2824</b>	<b>12739</b>	<b>6689</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>892</b>	<b>23756</b>
Advice/counselling	40%	46%	44%	F	34%	44%
Information	37%	39%	42%	F	36%	39%
Language	12% <sup>E</sup>	10%	10%	F	23% <sup>E</sup>	11%
Financial	11% <sup>E</sup>	9%	9%	F	19% <sup>E</sup>	10%
<b><u>Immigrants who did not get help needed for the most serious problem in finding employment --- Wave 2</u></b>	<b>2358</b>	<b>9008</b>	<b>3841</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>16533</b>
Information	50%	45%	40%	58% <sup>E</sup>	42%	44%
Advice/counselling	37%	41%	38%	42% <sup>E</sup>	39%	39%
Language	15% <sup>E</sup>	7%	12%	F	14% <sup>E</sup>	10%
Financial	11% <sup>E</sup>	8%	8% <sup>E</sup>	F	16% <sup>E</sup>	8%
Work related training	8% <sup>E</sup>	9%	F	F	F	7%
<b><u>Immigrants who did not get help needed for the most serious problem in finding employment --- Wave 3</u></b>	<b>1886</b>	<b>6065</b>	<b>3678</b>	<b>340<sup>E</sup></b>	<b>707</b>	<b>12840</b>
Information	33% <sup>E</sup>	37%	39%	F	38% <sup>E</sup>	37%
Work related training	31% <sup>E</sup>	34%	30%	F	26% <sup>E</sup>	31%
Advice/counselling	25% <sup>E</sup>	28%	26%	F	29% <sup>E</sup>	27%
Language	F	7% <sup>E</sup>	9% <sup>E</sup>	F	F	8%

<sup>1</sup> All immigrants include a small number of immigrants who landed in the classed not mentioned in the tables

<sup>E</sup> Use with caution.

F Too unreliable to be released.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005



## Accessing education and/or training

Acquiring education or training courses in Canada is associated with social integration and labour market success for many new immigrants. It is regarded by most immigrants as a way to improve their skills and facilitate their integration in Canada. According to a study based on the LSIC Wave 1, the vast majority (89%) of the LSIC newcomers reported that it was very important or important to their future to further their education or training in Canada.<sup>7</sup> During the 4 years following their landing, a significant number of newcomers took education or training courses in the initial years (45%, 29% and 24% at 6 months, 2 years and 4 years after landing, respectively).

### Lowest involvement rate among four integration tasks

In spite of relatively large number of immigrants taking education or training courses in the initial years, this task involved the least number of immigrants compared to other domains.

Through the first 4 years, quite a number of newcomers reported barriers in accessing education: 27% (or about 42,400) at 6 months after landing,<sup>8</sup> 15% (or 24,200) at 2 years after arrival and 17% (or 26,800) by the 4th year in Canada (Table 4). Among the immigration categories, refugees were most likely to report problems in accessing education (27%) while family class immigrants were least likely to report difficulties (14%) 4 years after arrival.

**Table 4: Had problems in getting education by immigration category**

	Immigration Category					All Immigrants <sup>1</sup>
	Family Class	Skilled Workers (PA)	Skilled Workers (S&D)	Other Economic	Refugees	
<b>All immigrants</b>	42615	54527	40016	9835	9741	157615
Immigrants w ho had problems in getting education <sup>2</sup> --- Wave 1	19%	31%	31%	29%	25%	27%
Immigrants w ho had problems in getting education --- Wave 2	13%	16%	16%	12%	25%	15%
Immigrants w ho had problems in getting education --- Wave 3	14%	16%	19%	20%	27%	17%

<sup>1</sup> All immigrants include a small number of immigrants w ho landed in the classes not specified in the table

<sup>2</sup> The coverages w ere different in 3 w aves. Education or training included language training in the Wave 1 questionnaire w hile excluding language training in the Wave 2 and 3 questionnaires.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005

### Financial time constraints the most serious hindrance to accessing education

For all LSIC immigrants, the most serious problem accessing education or training shifted from language obstacles at 6 months after landing to financial constraints at 2 and 4 years after landing (Figure 7). Meanwhile, time constraints had ranked the second most serious problem at 2 years after landing, followed by language barriers. This pattern was consistent for all immigration categories and prominent for skilled workers: a majority of skilled workers cited financial or time constraints as the main difficulties accessing education or training (67% for SWPA<sup>9</sup> and 52% for SWSD<sup>10</sup>) at 4 years after

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada (2005), “Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - A Portrait of Early Settlement Experiences”, Catalogue no. 89-614-XPE, pp46.

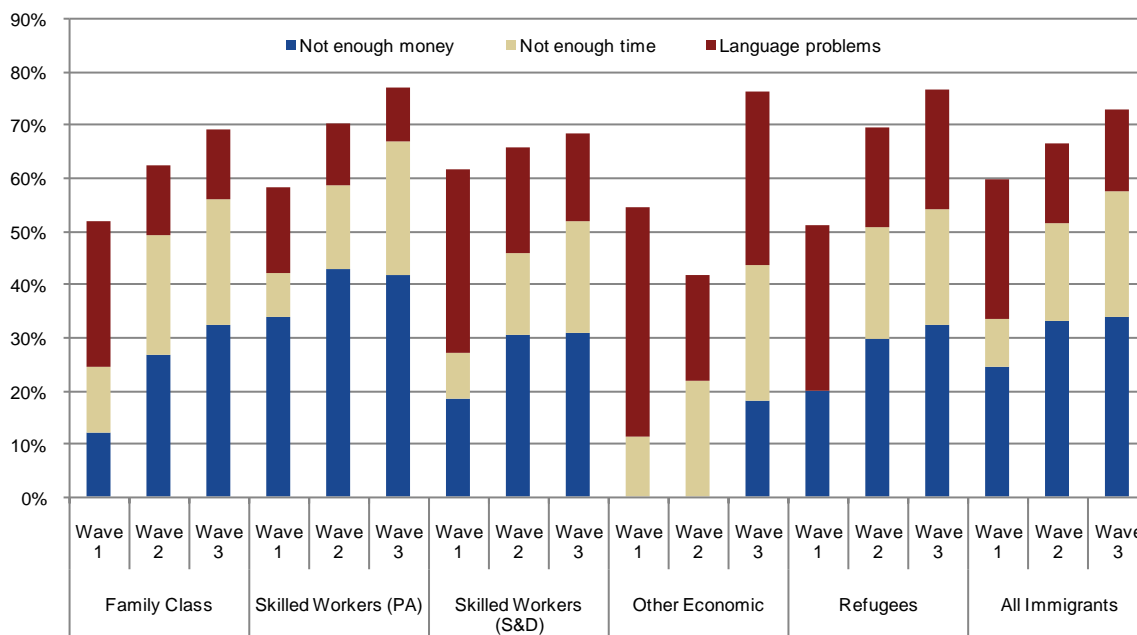
<sup>8</sup> As the coverage changed in Wave 2 and 3 to exclude language training from the education entity, the proportion reporting difficulties in getting education excluding language courses in Wave 1 was expected to be smaller than 27%.

<sup>9</sup> SWPA – skilled worker principal applicants.

arrival. Because of financial and time constraints, many immigrants may have chosen not to take part in education or training.

Language barriers were a critical obstacle for refugees and other economic immigrants. By the 4<sup>th</sup> year in Canada, among all the immigrants who reported encountering problems accessing education, 22% of refugees and 32% of other economic class immigrants claimed that language barriers was the most serious difficulty.

**Figure 7: The most serious problem in getting education, by immigration category – Wave 1, 2, and 3**



Based on the number of LSIC immigrants.  
Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005.

The types of difficulties accessing education varied a little by age group. Younger immigrants aged 15 to 25 years were more likely to report financial pressure (36%), while older newcomers were more likely to report time constraints (13%, 24% and 28% for those aged 15 to 24 years, 25 to 44 years, 45 years and over, respectively) between 2 years after landing and 4 years after landing.

### Proportion of immigrants receiving help and those not receiving help needed decreased over time

Among the immigrants who encountered difficulties accessing education or training, nearly 2 in 10 (17%) received help for the most serious problem at 4 years after landing, a decrease from 38% at 6 months after landing and 19% at 2 years after arrival (Table 5). The biggest decline occurred for refugees: while almost half (48%) of the refugees who encountered difficulties received help at 6 months, this proportion dropped to 16% and 10% at 2 years and 4 years after landing. What does this trend show? Does it indicate less assistance is given to immigrants for education? Further evidence to this question will be examined when we look at the proportion of newcomers reporting not receiving help needed for education problems.

Among those immigrants who encountered barriers accessing education or training, more than 3 in 10 (32%) had not received the help they needed for the most serious problem in the first 2 years while only 23% reported so at 4 years after landing. Consistent with this pattern, all immigration categories exhibited the same decreasing trend, except for newcomers in the other economic class. Refugees

<sup>10</sup> SWS – skilled worker spouse and dependants.

experienced the greatest decrease: 38% for the first 2 waves and 20% at 4 years after arrival reported unmet needs.

Putting the above two conclusions together, the concurrent decline in the proportions of immigrants receiving assistance and having needs unmet might reflect a reduced demand for assistance in the area of accessing education or training: Newcomers had fewer unmet needs and as a result, requested and received less help from others. It appears that refugees made the greatest gains, which is reflected by the biggest declines of reported unmet needs for this group. By the 4<sup>th</sup> year in Canada, immigrants landed in economic class were most likely to report needing but not receiving help, especially for skilled worker principal applicants (27%).

**Table 5: Received help and had unmet needs for the most serious problem in getting education by immigration category**

	Immigration Category					All Immigrants <sup>1</sup>
	Family Class	Skilled Workers (PA)	Skilled Workers (S&D)	Other Economic	Refugees	
<b><u>Immigrants who had problems in getting education --- Wave 1</u></b>	<b>7895</b>	<b>16763</b>	<b>12266</b>	<b>2855</b>	<b>2437</b>	<b>42388</b>
Immigrants who had received help for the most serious problem in getting education --- Wave 1	44%	31%	40%	39%	48%	38%
Immigrants who had not got help needed for the most serious problem in getting education --- Wave 1	27%	34%	33%	12% <sup>E</sup>	38%	32%
<b><u>Immigrants who had problems in getting education --- Wave 2</u></b>	<b>5515</b>	<b>8464</b>	<b>6427</b>	<b>1207</b>	<b>2411</b>	<b>24194</b>
Immigrants who had received help for the most serious problem in getting education --- Wave 2	18%	20%	22%	16% <sup>E</sup>	16% <sup>E</sup>	19%
Immigrants who had not got help needed for the most serious problem in getting education --- Wave 2	30%	34%	31%	15% <sup>E</sup>	38%	32%
<b><u>Immigrants who had problems in getting education --- Wave 3</u></b>	<b>6017</b>	<b>8541</b>	<b>7428</b>	<b>1955</b>	<b>2647</b>	<b>26768</b>
Immigrants who had received help for the most serious problem in getting education --- Wave 3	15%	18%	19%	18% <sup>E</sup>	10% <sup>E</sup>	17%
Immigrants who had not got help needed for the most serious problem in getting education --- Wave 3	18%	27%	24%	24% <sup>E</sup>	20%	23%

<sup>1</sup> All immigrants include a small number of immigrants who landed in the classes not specified in the table.

<sup>E</sup> Use with caution.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005

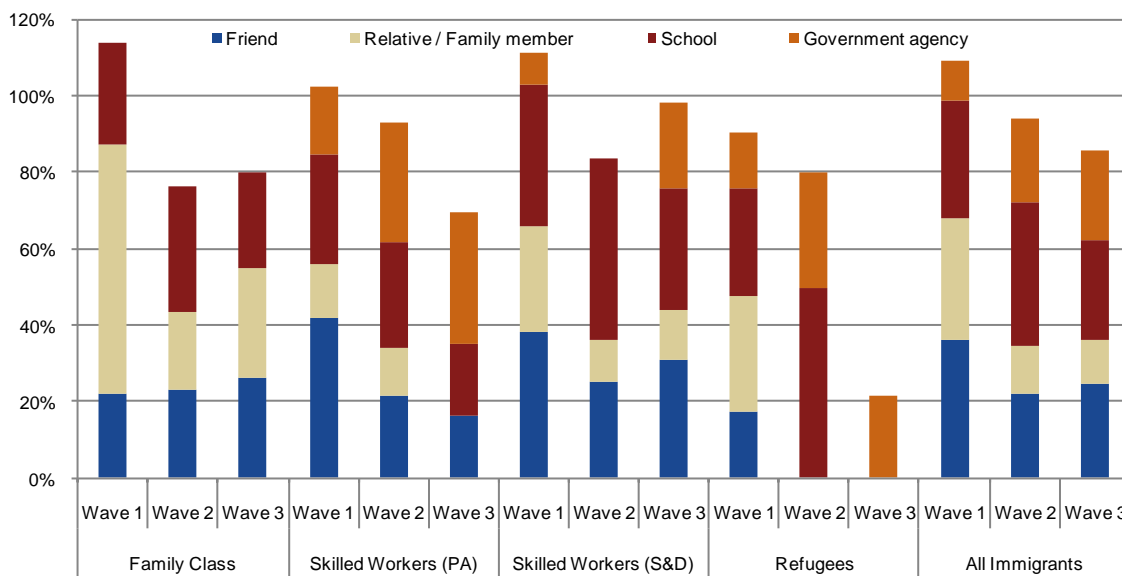
## School, friends, government and family helped newcomers overcome problems accessing education or training

Social networks continued to play an important role assisting newcomers accessing education or training. Friends and family were reported as the top sources of assistance for educational problems all through the first 4 years. However, relatives dropped out of the top 3 most frequently cited sources at 2 years after landing, ranking after school, friends, and government agencies in the Wave 2 and Wave 3 interviews.

Examining the main sources of help by immigration category, we found that the largest difference was between family class and skilled worker principal applicants. Throughout the three waves, family class

immigrants relied on relatives and family members for problems in this area (65%, 20% and 29% at 6 months, 2 years and 4 years after landing respectively), while skilled worker principal applicants tended to rely on friends for assistance (42%, 21% and 16%). The extent of the dominance of specific networks as the source of help in the initial months reduced over time. Immigrants tended to rely on multiple resources to overcome training related difficulties. School and government agencies gradually became the main source of help for the LSIC newcomers.

**Figure 8: Main source of help for the most serious problem accessing education or training, by immigration category - Wave 1, 2, and 3.**



Other Economic Class was omitted in the chart due to the large presence of unreliable estimates. Based on the immigrants who had received help for the most serious problem in getting education in each wave. Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005.

## Financial help, information and advice constantly needed for helping with problems accessing education or training

Financial help, information and advice were consistently identified as barriers to accessing education or training through the first 4 years. By the end of 4<sup>th</sup> year, 52% of immigrants reported needing but not receiving help needed for their most serious problem in accessing education, financial help, followed by information (39%) and advice or counselling (19%). Little variation occurred across immigration categories.

Immigrants in different age groups identified different needs when accessing education or training. Newcomers aged 15 to 24 years cited information as most needed (35%) at 4 years after landing while those in prime working age (25 to 44 years) and those 45 years over reported financial assistance as the most cited need (52% and 56% respectively).

## Accessing health care services

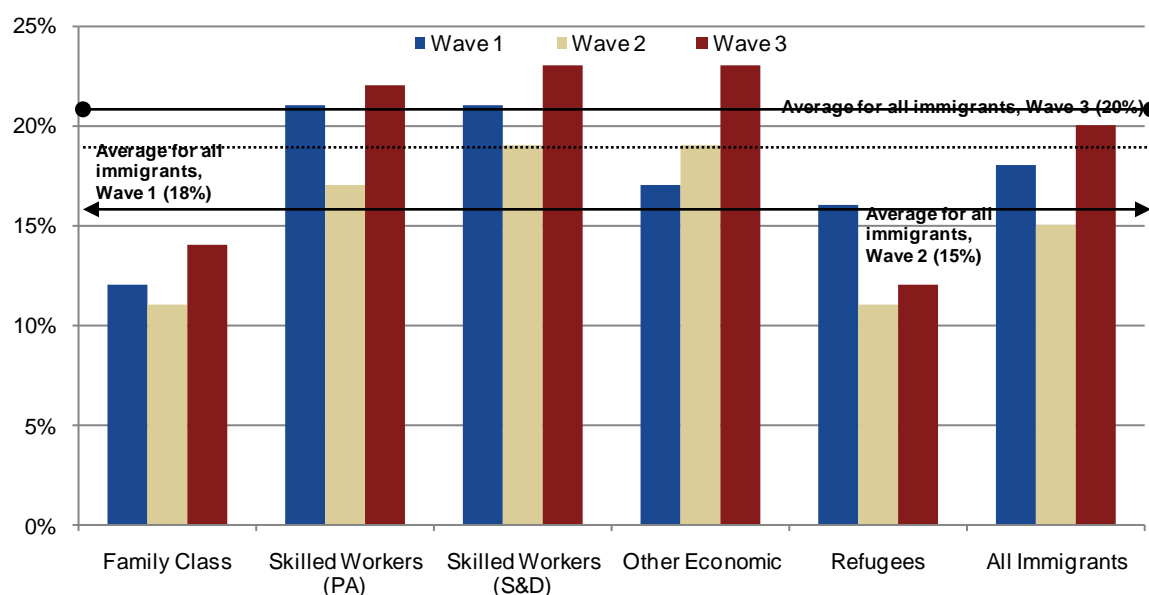
### Majority of immigrants tried to access health care services in the initial 4 years

Accessing health care services was an ongoing settlement and integration activity reported by the most immigrants throughout the 4 years. Among the four integration activities examined (i.e. finding employment, accessing education, accessing health care services and finding housing), accessing health care services was the activity in which the second largest number (31,300 or 20%) of immigrants reported barriers at the end of 4 years in Canada, while the least number of immigrants reported difficulties in this area in the first 6 months (18%) compared with other integration tasks.

### Family class immigrants least likely reported obstacles accessing health care services

Different immigration categories exhibited variations in the proportion reporting problems or difficulties accessing health care services. Economic immigrants were more likely to report problems accessing health care, as shown in Figure 9 by higher than average proportions reporting problems in all 3 waves.<sup>11</sup> Possibly through families' help and support, family class immigrants were able to better deal with obstacles related to health services, and as a result, they were least likely to report difficulties among all immigration classes. Over the duration of the LSIC, increasing proportions of immigrants who reported difficulties accessing health care services were found in almost all the immigration categories, with the exception of refugees. By the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> year in Canada, 12% of refugees claimed barriers accessing health care services, which was the smallest proportion among all the immigration classes at the same point in time, and also the only decrease in the proportion reporting barriers accessing health care services compared to the first 6 months in Canada.

**Figure 9: Proportion of immigrants who encountered difficulties accessing health care services, by immigration category – Wave 1, 2, and 3.**



- Based on the number of all LSIC immigrants.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005.

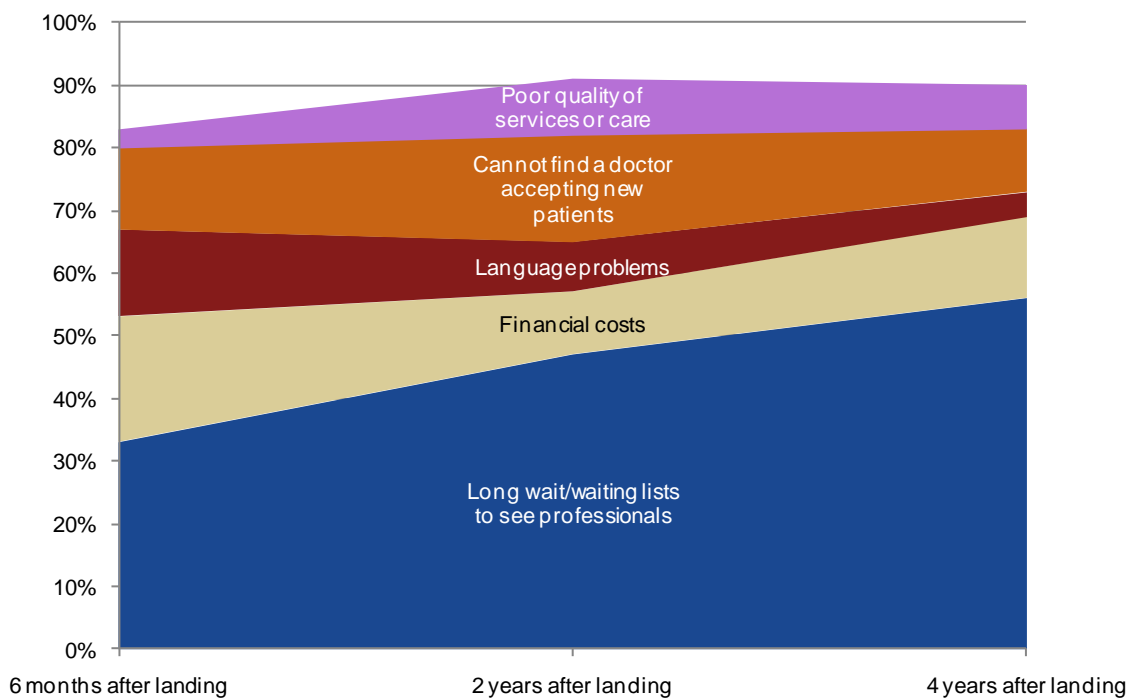
<sup>11</sup> The only exception was other economic immigrants in Wave 1.

## Long wait times to see doctors was the dominating problem

Long wait times was ranked as the most reported problem related to accessing health care services throughout the first 4 years for the LSIC immigrants (Figure 10). This problem worsened over time with increasing proportions citing wait times as the most serious problem. Of note, this problem is not specific to the immigrant community, as Canadians also mention long wait times as a critical problem for health care access — “waiting too long for care was cited as the number one barrier among those who experienced difficulties.”<sup>12</sup> Poor quality of services or care was another emerging problem reported by these newcomers.

It is also worth noting that as time went on, the proportion citing language problems as the most serious difficulty in accessing health care dropped significantly, from 14% at 6 months to 4% at 4 years after arrival.

**Figure 10: Most serious problem in accessing health care during the first 4 years in Canada**



- Based on the immigrants who reported difficulties in getting health care services.  
Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005.

## Family class immigrants were most likely to receive assistance for health care related barriers

While the proportion of immigrants who reported receiving help for barriers accessing health care services decreased over time (28%, 14% and 11% at the time of Wave 1, 2 and 3, respectively), the proportion reporting not receiving assistance needed also displayed a similar decreasing trend (28%, 18% and 17% in 3 waves, respectively) (Table 6). Although the percentage of newcomers getting assistance declined with time spent in Canada, the decline may partly reflect a reduced need for such help.

Family class immigrants were most likely to obtain assistance with problems accessing health care services compared with their counterparts who landed in the other immigration categories. Presence of

<sup>12</sup> Statistics Canada (2006), Access to Health Care Services in Canada, January to December 2005, Catalogue No. 82-575-XIE2006002, p. 9.

some kind of network upon landing probably played a role in assisting immigrants in this category accessing health care services. In contrast, refugees had the highest proportion for reporting unmet needs.

**Table 6: Received help and needed but not received help for the most serious problem reported for accessing health care services.**

	Immigration Category					All Immigrants <sup>2</sup>
	Family Class	Skilled Workers (PA)	Skilled Workers (S&D)	Other Economic	Refugees	
<b><u>Immigrants who had problems accessing health care --- Wave 1</u></b>	<b>5092</b>	<b>11399</b>	<b>8432</b>	<b>1644</b>	<b>1583</b>	<b>28203</b>
Immigrants who had received help for the most serious problem in getting health care --- Wave 1	42%	23%	27%	19%	33%	28%
Immigrants who had not received help needed for the most serious problem accessing health care services --- Wave 1	29%	31%	25%	13%	39%	28%
<b><u>Immigrants who had problems accessing health care --- Wave 2</u></b>	<b>4627</b>	<b>9139</b>	<b>7423</b>	<b>1850</b>	<b>1041</b>	<b>24114</b>
Immigrants who had received help for the most serious problem in getting health care --- Wave 2	21%	15%	9%	10%	8%	14%
Immigrants who had not received help needed for health problem in general <sup>1</sup> --- Wave 2	12%	18%	22%	11%	24%	18%
<b><u>Immigrants who had problems accessing health care --- Wave 3</u></b>	<b>6095</b>	<b>12233</b>	<b>9400</b>	<b>2290</b>	<b>1191</b>	<b>31295</b>
Immigrants who had received help for the most serious problem in getting health care --- Wave 3	14%	8%	11%	12% <sup>E</sup>	F	11%
Immigrants who had not received help needed for health problem in general <sup>1</sup> --- Wave 3	15%	17%	18%	18% <sup>E</sup>	20% <sup>E</sup>	17%

<sup>1</sup> Source question was changed substantially. Instead of being asked about whether the LR had needed but did not receive help for the most serious problem in accessing health care, the question was asked about whether the LR had any help needed but did not

<sup>2</sup> All immigrants include a small number of immigrants who landed in the classes not mentioned in the table.

<sup>E</sup> Use with caution.

F Too unreliable to be released.

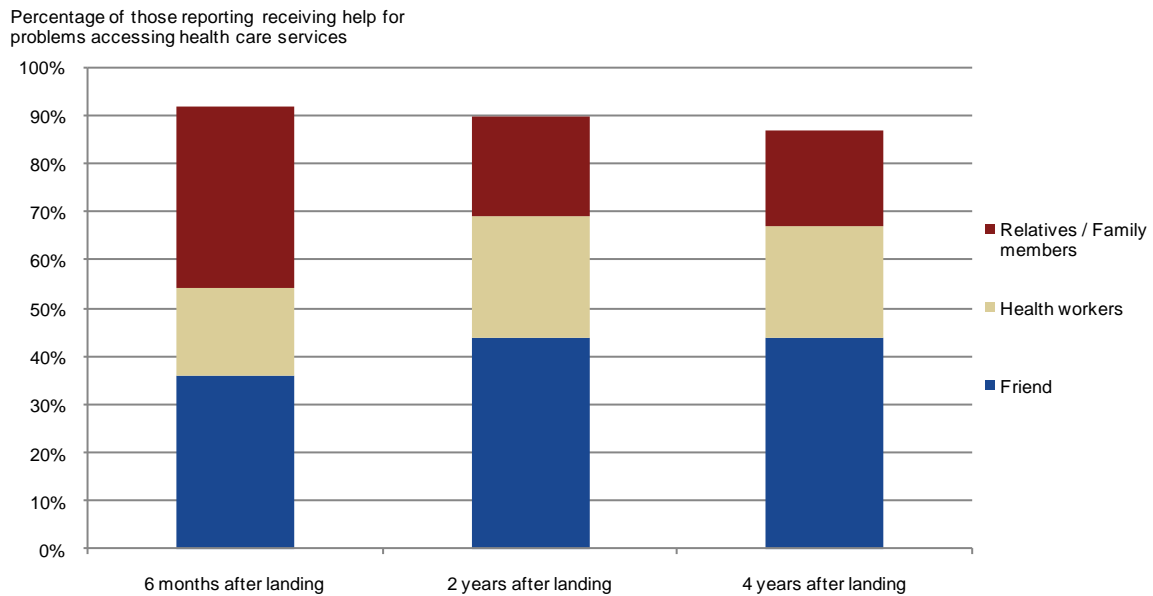
Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada --Wave 3, 2005.

Not surprisingly, older immigrants received more attention accessing health care services. Four years after landing, of immigrants 45 years of age and over who reported problems accessing health care, 14% received help for the most serious problem, considerably higher than the proportion for immigrants aged 25 to 44 years (9%).

## Friends were the most cited source of help for problems accessing health care services

Looking at the sources of assistance, social networks were prevalent for all immigrants (Figure 11). Help from a friend was one of the most cited resources of help for obstacles accessing health care services (36% at 6 months after landing and 44% since 2 years after arrival). The prevalence of the reliance on relatives declined from 38% at 6 months after landing to 20% at 4 years in Canada, but the use of the kinship network was still prominent. In addition, there was a modest increase in the proportion of immigrants reporting receiving help from health care workers over time.

**Figure 11: Main sources of help received for the most serious problem accessing health care services – Wave 1, 2, and 3.**



Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005.

Financial assistance and information were the types of help most needed but not received for problems accessing health care services for the LSIC newcomers. Four years after landing, nearly one in three (31%) immigrants who reported not receiving help needed claimed financial assistance was most needed, closely followed by information (30%) and advice (22%). Across immigration category, it is worth noting that financial assistance was most pronounced for refugees (57%) while skilled worker principal applicants were more likely to report needing information (32%).



## Finding housing

### Most immigrants did not encounter difficulties finding housing

The proportion of immigrants who did not encounter problems or difficulties increased over time. At the third wave interview, 4 years after arrival, more than eight in ten (83%) of the 67,500 immigrants who had tried to find housing did not report any difficulties, compared with the first two waves (62% at 6 months after arrival and 75% at 2 years after landing). The LSIC newcomers were less likely to report difficulties finding housing than any other task examined. The proportion of family class immigrants looking for housing was the lowest among all the immigration categories throughout the 4 years. Among the newcomers who had looked for housing, family class and other economic immigrants were less likely to report difficulties. In contrast, refugees faced more problems compared to immigrants in other categories.

**Table 7: Involvement and incidence of problems finding housing - Wave 1, 2, and 3**

	Immigration Category					All Immigrants <sup>3</sup>
	Family Class	Skilled Workers (PA)	Skilled Workers (S&D)	Other Economic	Refugees	
<b>All immigrants</b>	<b>42615</b>	<b>54527</b>	<b>40016</b>	<b>9835</b>	<b>9741</b>	<b>157615</b>
Immigrants w ho had looked for housing --- Wave 1 <sup>1</sup>	42%	91%	90%	90%	83%	77%
Immigrants w ho had looked for housing --- Wave 2 <sup>1</sup>	37%	63%	61%	46%	56%	54%
Immigrants w ho had looked for housing --- Wave 3 <sup>1</sup>	33%	49%	46%	35%	47%	43%
Immigrants w ho had problems finding housing --- Wave 1 <sup>2</sup>	14%	44%	45%	27%	40%	38%
Immigrants w ho had problems finding housing --- Wave 2 <sup>2</sup>	19%	26%	28%	14%	37%	25%
Immigrants w ho had problems finding housing --- Wave 3 <sup>2</sup>	16%	16%	18%	14%	29%	17%

<sup>1</sup> Percentages are based on all LSIC immigrants.

<sup>2</sup> Percentages are based on immigrants w ho had looked for housing.

<sup>3</sup> All immigrants include a small number of immigrants w ho landed in the classes other than those mentioned in the table.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005.

### Home ownership rate increased substantially over time

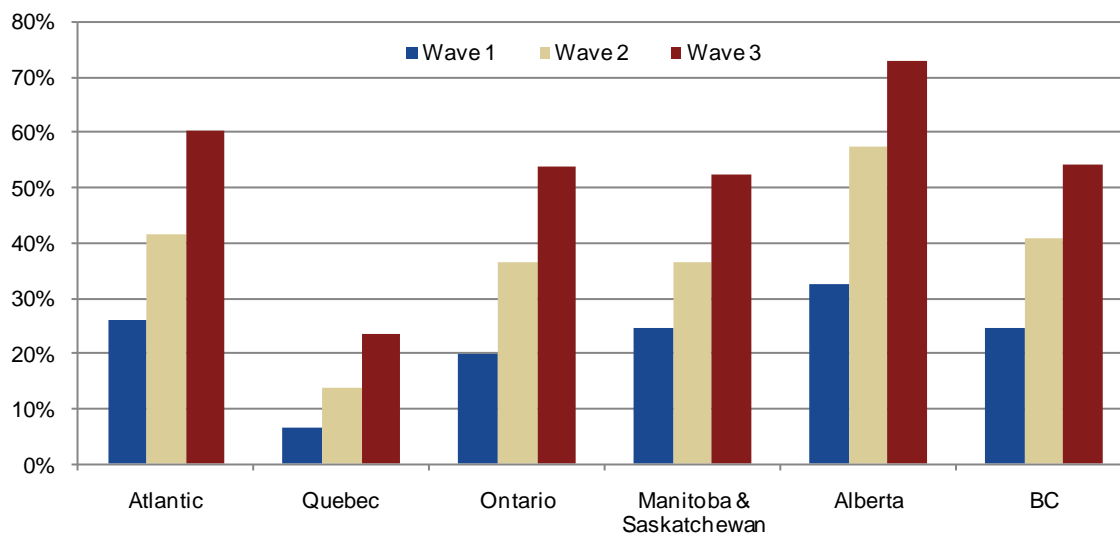
The rate of home ownership increased substantially with time spent in Canada. At 6 months after landing, only 1 in 5 (20%) immigrants owned their homes.<sup>13</sup> Four years after their arrival, over half (51%) of the LSIC newcomers owned their homes, closer to the Canadian average rate of home ownership.<sup>14</sup> Although housing demand is driven by multiple factors such as household structure, income, local affordability as well as traditional attitude towards residence, one determining factor of home ownership is labour market status. Thus it is not surprising to see matching trends shown by home ownership and labour market performance. For instance, there was a steadily increasing proportion of economic immigrants buying houses over time. Refugees had the smallest increase in home ownership rates over the 4 years in Canada.

<sup>13</sup> Ownership includes those owned with mortgage or owned without mortgage.

<sup>14</sup> By 2001, the average home ownership rate in Canada was 65.8%. Source: Canadian Housing Observer, CMHC, Ottawa.

Progress also differed across province of residence. Immigrants living in Quebec were least likely to buy residences at different points in time (Figure 12). Consistent with the economic performance across provinces, newcomers who went to Alberta exhibited stronger purchasing power for homes throughout the first 4 years in Canada. These situations may be related to a combination of factors that include housing affordability and the labour market performance of the LSIC immigrants in Quebec.

**Figure 12: Home ownership rate by province - Wave 1, 2, and 3**



Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005.

### Housing costs was the most pronounced difficulty in finding housing at any point in time

Financial constraints was the most cited barrier in finding housing at any point in time and increased over time (31%, 41% and 56% of immigrants who had reported problems in getting housing at 6 months, 2 years and 4 years after landing). Lack of suitable accommodation and low vacancies were the other two persistent obstacles faced by newcomers in the initial years following their arrival. Not surprisingly, lack of credit dropped out of the top 3 difficulties accessing housing after 6 months in Canada.

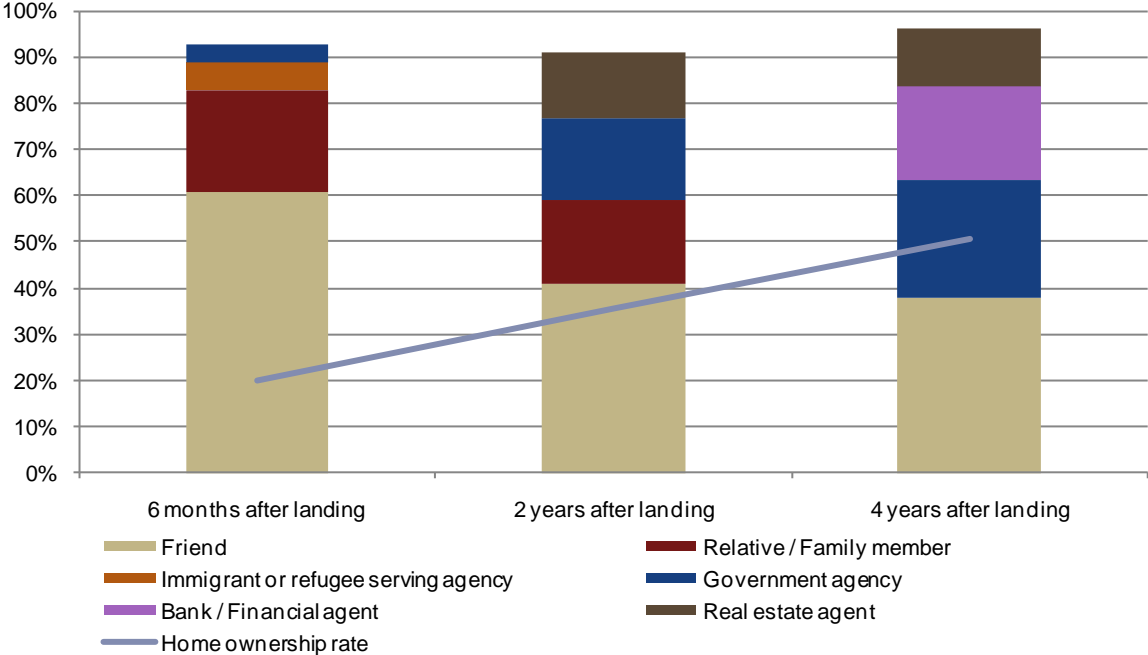
About one in five (18%) immigrants who had difficulties finding housing reported they had received assistance between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> wave. Newcomers were less likely to get help with problems finding housing over time. This trend was consistent across all immigration categories. It could possibly be explained by declined needs for assistance and the proportion of immigrants claiming unmet needs lend some evidence to it. Among the newcomers who had encountered difficulties finding housing, 21% reported not receiving help needed, which did not vary much relative to 25% at 6 months after arrival and 19% at 2 years after landing. The slight decrease in the percentage of immigrants claiming unmet needs may reflect some progress in meeting newcomers' accommodation requirements.

### Friends helped out in finding housing

Friends were the dominating source of help for difficulties in finding housing throughout the four years (Figure 13). The reliance on relatives and family members tended to decline with time while the role of government agencies increased. Immigrants who received help for housing problems cited real estate agents and banks or financial agents as an increasing source of assistance. Between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year after arrival, bank or financial agents (20%) ranked the 3<sup>rd</sup> most cited source of help for difficulties in getting housing, followed by real estate agent (13%). This was likely associated with the increase in the

rate of home ownership with the increased time spent in Canada. As newcomers started to purchase their own property, it was natural for them to go to real estate agent for information, consulting services and to financial institutions for borrowing.

**Figure 13: Main sources of help for the most serious problem in finding housing – Wave 1, 2, and 3**



Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005.

Financial aid, information and advice or counselling ranked as the top 3 unmet needs cited by immigrants who reported not receiving help needed. This was persistent across time and immigration categories. By the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> year in Canada, of immigrants who reported unmet needs for housing problems, almost half (47%) mentioned needing financial help and 38% needed information.

## Conclusions

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The first 4 years in a host country is a key period that immigrants are completing initial short-term settlement, and starting intermediate-term adaptation and long-term integration processes. It is a two-way process that encourages adjustments on both newcomers and the receiving society. The interaction between these two determines the outcomes of the settlement, adaptation and integration processes.

For new immigrants, getting settled and integrated into Canadian society entails not only challenges, but also hope and success. During the initial four years the LSIC immigrants made economic and social assimilation. As time unfolded, more immigrants secured employment, owned homes, and were involved in a variety of social activities. The proportion of newcomers who encountered difficulties in the main integration tasks examined declined with the time.

Compared to the first 6 months in Canada, the most serious problems faced by newcomers had shifted from the obstacles specific to immigrants to more general problems at 4 years after landing. As time went by, language barriers were cited less while financial constraints were more prevalent in all integration activities examined.

Social networks continued to play a role helping newcomers overcome difficulties. As immigrants made new friends, friendship became the dominating source of assistance in helping newcomers. While relatives or family members helped newcomers out in the initial months, reliance on government agencies increased as time went on.

Although many newcomers received help with difficulties encountered during the settlement process, a persistent proportion of immigrants reported having unmet needs. After 4 years in Canada, financial help, information and advice or counselling services were the most cited needs. As immigrants are by definition newcomers in the host country, they are more susceptible to the information problems that generate needs for assistance in the first place. It is not a surprise to see that information and related advice were most needed in immigrants' early integration process. The increases in financial resources need over time echoed with financial constraints as one of main obstacles, pointing out the emerging economic challenge in these newcomers' integration life. The consistently reported gaps between these needs and offers implied policy gaps in providing some essential aid for newcomers.

Further in-depth analysis based on all LSIC waves will help to explain the complexity of the integration process of immigrants to Canada, especially among recent immigrants who landed after 2000.

## Appendix

**Table 8: Labour force statistics by immigration category, province or residence and age group - Wave 1, 2, and 3**

	Participation rate <sup>1</sup>			Employment rate <sup>1</sup>			Unemployment rate <sup>1</sup>		
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
	%								
All immigrants	71.47	81.55	84.62	45.49	59.05	68.31	36.35	27.59	19.27
<b>Immigration category</b>									
Family class	62.53	70.58	71.06	41.00	49.88	55.47	33.97	29.33	21.94
Skilled worker principal applications	91.53	95.36	96.37	62.49	74.30	83.56	31.73	22.08	13.29
Skilled worker spouses and dependants	65.25	78.64	85.40	36.10	52.74	65.24	44.67	32.93	23.61
Other economic	49.04	71.99	78.78	28.76	50.92	62.00	41.35	29.27	21.30
Refugees	46.24	72.22	79.54	22.12	45.15	56.34	52.16	37.48	29.17
<b>Province of residence</b>									
Atlantic provinces	65.76	82.96	83.64	48.80	58.06	75.08	25.79	30.01	10.23
Quebec	67.54	75.21	81.75	32.57	45.66	58.69	51.78	39.29	28.21
Ontario	74.14	82.67	85.25	48.38	61.79	69.83	34.75	25.26	18.09
Manitoba & Saskatchewan	72.89	88.02	92.50	57.87	70.30	79.80	20.61	20.13	13.73
Alberta	74.70	86.82	88.18	58.12	66.20	76.84	22.20	23.75	12.86
British Columbia	65.04	80.02	82.27	39.76	57.23	65.78	38.87	28.48	20.04
<b>Age group</b>									
15-24 years	57.97	80.29	87.14	35.62	49.84	60.18	38.55	37.93	30.94
25-44 years	78.79	86.60	89.68	51.27	64.33	74.64	34.93	25.72	16.77
45 years and over	56.43	66.08	69.99	32.84	47.94	54.82	41.45	27.45	21.67

<sup>1</sup> For definitions of labour force statistics, see definition box below.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada - Wave 3, 2005.

### Definitions of labour force statistics

**Participation rate:** the number of the LSIC immigrants in the labour force (i.e. who were employed, unemployed or actively looking for employment) over the total number of the LSIC immigrants aged 15 and over (i.e. the overall LSIC population).

**Employment rate:** the number of employed LSIC immigrants over the total number of the LSIC immigrants aged 15 and over (i.e. the overall LSIC population).

**Unemployment rate:** the number of the LSIC immigrants who are unemployed and looking for work over the total number of the LSIC immigrants in the labour force.