



Welcoming and Integrating People in the Pontiac

Practical guide for organizations, municipalities,
businesses, and citizens

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A WORD OF WELCOME

The Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi du Pontiac is pleased to present this practical guide to welcoming and integrating newcomers to the Pontiac. This document has been designed as a concrete and accessible tool for all those who wish to help make our region a welcoming, inclusive, and open-minded place.

Immigration plays an essential role in the development and vitality of the Pontiac. It enriches our social fabric, boosts our economy, and brings cultural diversity that helps build a stronger and more resilient community. Each new resident who chooses the Pontiac brings not only their expertise, but also their history, traditions, and vision for the future.

"We are convinced that immigration is an essential asset for the development and vitality of our region. With the Welcome to Our Home, Welcome to Your Home campaign, we want to create a real collective momentum of openness and inclusion. Every new person who chooses to settle in the Pontiac helps strengthen our community, our culture, and our economy. "

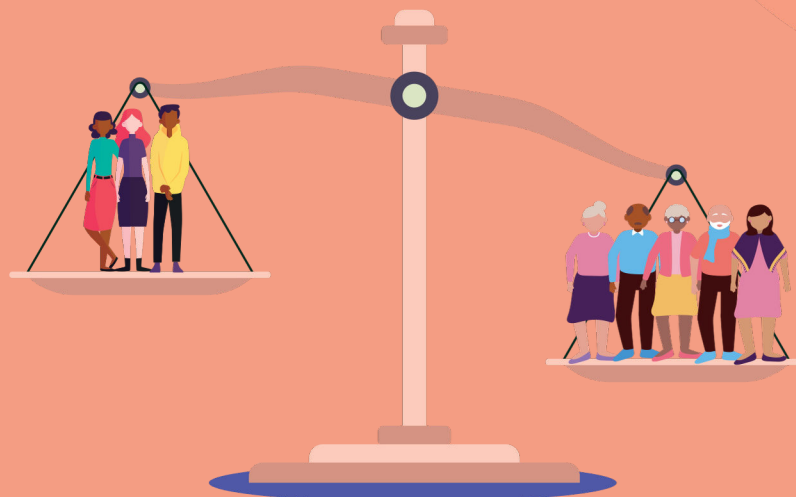
— Karim El Kerch, Executive Director of Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi du Pontiac

Together, let's make Pontiac a truly welcoming place where everyone, regardless of their origin, can find their place and contribute fully to our collective life.

OVERVIEW OF THE IMMIGRATION CONTEXT IN PONTIAC

1. KEY STATISTICS

- 2.3% is the percentage of the immigrant population (as of 2021, the most recent data available)
- Main racialized groups: 0.3% Black, 0.2% Filipino, and 0.2% Southeast Asian.¹
- In the Pontiac region, the natural population growth rate is negative, meaning that the number of deaths exceeds the number of births. This situation leads to a natural decline in the population, regardless of migration movements. This imbalance is mainly explained by significant demographic aging, with a large proportion of older adults and a relatively low birth rate.





SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF IMMIGRATION

2. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPORTANCE OF IMMIGRATION

Immigration brings real social and cultural dynamism to communities. Each immigrant contributes to enriching community life by bringing their languages, traditions, ideas, and skills. These contributions broaden our horizons and strengthen the social fabric, while boosting participation in local activities and networks.

According to data from the Government of Canada, immigrant people are heavily involved in the community: more than one in four people working in social assistance were born abroad. This is also the case for nearly one in five people working in social, cultural, civic, or charitable organizations.² These contributions are essential to providing and maintaining local services, especially in rural areas where they are sometimes scarce.

In short, immigration is not only an economic driver: it also fosters openness, solidarity, and cultural richness, which helps advance every region of the country.



SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF IMMIGRATION

3. ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF IMMIGRATION IN PONTIAC AND CANADA

Immigration plays a strategic role in economic development, both nationally and regionally.

Recent data from the Government of Canada shows that immigrant people represent 32% of business owners with employees, creating jobs in various sectors such as construction, professional services, health care, and retail.

Immigration also helps address the issue of population aging, which is particularly relevant to the Pontiac. While it cannot solve demographic aging on its own, immigration supports the growth and maintenance of essential services such as health care, public pension plans, and social services. Nearly two-thirds of newcomers are of working age, helping to rejuvenate the workforce and fill labour shortages.

In 2021, 44.5% of Canadian businesses reported difficulties in finding skilled workers. Systems such as Skilled worker selection program now target professions in high demand, particularly in the health care, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), skilled trades, transportation, agriculture, and agri-food sectors. These are essential industries for the country's vitality.



SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF IMMIGRATION

3. PRACTICAL TIPS FOR WELCOMING NEWCOMERS TO THE PONTIAC

Immigrant entrepreneurs boost the economy by creating jobs, attracting investment, and stimulating innovation. Nearly 1.4 million immigrant people in Canada have STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) skills, which are essential in a knowledge-based economy.

In the health care sector, immigrant people represent a quarter of the workforce. Between 2016 and 2021, more than 40% of newcomers employed in health care worked in critical areas such as institutional nursing, residential care, and home care services.

The impacts of immigration are also evident through key initiatives like Place aux jeunes en région (PAJR). In 2021–2022, the migration movements supported by PAJR generated \$287.8 million in Quebec's regions and supported 2,647 jobs. On average, each participant generates \$131,250 in added value for their host MRC. And these benefits are long-lasting: 66% of participants since 2007 still live in their host region³

These data clearly show that immigration strengthens economic growth and community resilience, including in regions such as Pontiac where labour availability is a significant issue.



SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF IMMIGRATION

4. TRENDS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES SPECIFIC TO THE REGION

Recent trends

Immigration in the Pontiac is slowly increasing, driven by labour needs and the desire to attract young families to combat the aging population. Newcomers include both skilled workers and families seeking a quiet and welcoming living environment. The main trends are:

- An increase in young families settling in the area,
- A diversification of professional profiles,
- A growing interest in working in rural areas.



SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF IMMIGRATION

4. TRENDS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES SPECIFIC TO THE REGION

Key challenges in Pontiac

The Pontiac has a population of approximately 14,765 (2021) people, with an aging population whose average age is 46.6. The percentage of people aged 65 and over is 27.7%, which is one of the highest rates in Quebec.

The proportion of young people aged 14 and under is low, at only 15.2% (2011 data), while young people aged 15 to 24, who are entering the labour market, represent only 11.4% of the total population. At the same time, the proportion of workers aged 55 to 64 is on the rise (17.5%), posing a major challenge in terms of workforce renewal.⁴

The labour market shows worrying indicators, with activity (53.5%) and employment (47.1%) rates below the provincial averages. The unemployment rate is particularly high at 11.9%, the highest in the Outaouais region after the Vallée-de-la-Gatineau RCM.

4. [Employment Quebec Outaouais \(French\)](#).



SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF IMMIGRATION

4. TRENDS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES SPECIFIC TO THE REGION

Key sectors of activity

Most Pontiac residents work in sectors related to public services:

- Health care and social assistance (14.1% of jobs);
- Commerce (11.7%);
- Public administration (10.9%);
- Construction (10.5%);
- Education services (8.1%).



SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF IMMIGRATION

5. OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PONTIAC REGION

The Pontiac region is becoming increasingly attractive to students and young families, particularly due to its affordable cost of living and natural environment. The majority of workers (59%) are employed in the RCM, reflecting an active local economy.

Population renewal and the diversification of professional profiles present opportunities to meet labour needs. The advance of teleworking also creates a new dynamic, encouraging people to settle in rural areas.

Finally, service sectors, particularly health care, education, construction, and commerce, are important drivers of regional economic development.⁵



PRACTICAL TIPS FOR WELCOMING NEWCOMERS TO THE PONTIAC

1. WELCOMING NEWCOMERS TO RURAL AREAS

Rural areas such as the Pontiac offer a peaceful and welcoming living environment, but can pose challenges for newcomers due to distant services and demographic homogeneity.

Best practices to adopt:

- Provide information on essential services and specify the location and hours of businesses, schools, clinics, community centers, and transportation services.
- Encourage participation in local events by inviting them to village events, farmers' markets, festivals, and sporting activities to promote social ties.
- Adapt your communication by using clear language, offering bilingual or visual documents, and explaining acronyms or abbreviations specific to the region.
- Facilitate social connections: put them in touch with neighbours or volunteers to create a support network from the very beginning.



PRACTICAL TIPS FOR WELCOMING NEWCOMERS TO THE PONTIAC

2. WELCOMING NEW EMPLOYEES

Recruiting newcomers is a valuable opportunity to diversify talent, meet labour needs, and enrich corporate culture. The first job is often a key step in integrating a newcomer into their community. It is therefore essential that their entry into the workplace is well managed and done in a humane manner to help with integration into the team. Here are some tools to help employers recruit newcomers:

1. Adopt an inclusive approach from the recruitment stage

- Write accessible job postings using simple, clear language and avoiding cultural or overly technical expressions.
- Value transferable skills and recognize experience and qualifications acquired abroad if applicable in your industry.
- Offer fair hiring processes by adapting interviews to take into account linguistic and cultural differences, for example by allowing more time or personalizing your questions to ensure clarity.



PRACTICAL TIPS FOR WELCOMING NEWCOMERS TO THE PONTIAC

2. WELCOMING NEW EMPLOYEES

2. Facilitate welcoming and integrating in the workplace

- Organize a structured welcome by clearly presenting internal rules, expectations, available resources, and safety instructions.
- Offer tailored training that includes technical tasks, work practices, organizational culture, and social norms in the workplace to help them integrate with the team.
- Set up a mentoring system by pairing a new immigrant employee with an experienced colleague who can support them, answer their questions, and facilitate their social integration.

3. Support communication and understanding

- Use clear and simple language in everyday exchanges.
- Provide bilingual or visual documents whenever possible.
- Encourage patience and kindness toward linguistic or cultural differences among the team.



PRACTICAL TIPS FOR WELCOMING NEWCOMERS TO THE PONTIAC

2. WELCOMING NEW EMPLOYEES

3. Promote social integration

- Encourage participation in team activities.
- Raise awareness of cultural diversity among teams to create an inclusive and respectful environment.

4. Provide regular follow-up

- Organize follow-up meetings to discuss progress, any difficulties, and support needs.
- Adapt support as needed by offering additional training, language assistance, and external resources.



PRACTICAL TIPS FOR WELCOMING NEWCOMERS TO THE PONTIAC

3. ONBOARDING IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Community organizations play an essential role in the integration of newcomers. Often the first point of contact, they offer a safe space where everyone can feel listened to and supported. These organizations also serve as a link to many essential services, such as employment, housing, health care, education, and French language training.

Active listening is a foundational best practice: taking the time to understand each person's background, needs, and expectations without judgment. This attention allows support to be tailored to each person's reality and helps build trust.

Guidance must be personalized and not standardized. Support workers refer newcomers to appropriate services based on their priorities and needs. Regular follow-up ensures continuous and effective assistance.

To strengthen the sense of belonging, it is important to encourage participation in community activities, volunteer work, or committees. This involvement facilitates the creation of social ties and the development of a local network.

Finally, creating intercultural spaces through workshops or meetings promotes dialogue between cultures. These moments of exchange help to better understand differences, break down stereotypes, and build an inclusive environment where diversity is valued.



PRACTICAL TIPS FOR WELCOMING NEWCOMERS TO THE PONTIAC

4. TIPS FOR CITIZENS

Welcoming newcomers often starts with small gestures. Showing kindness, such as a smile or a friendly gesture, can go a long way toward breaking the ice. It is important to be open to differences: customs, language, and lifestyles may vary, but they are a treasure to be discovered and shared.

Don't hesitate to invite newcomers to local activities, whether it's a community meal, a sporting event, or a village festival. Patience is also essential, as adapting to a new environment, especially with a different language, takes time.

Simple rules to ease the first meeting:

- Introduce yourself clearly, stating your name, job, family status, etc.
- Speak slowly and distinctly if you feel that language may be a barrier. Use gestures or images if necessary to ensure you are better understood.
- Ask open-ended questions to encourage conversation, such as, "What do you like about the area so far?"
- Avoid judgments and prejudices based on accent, appearance, or country of origin.



PRACTICAL TIPS FOR WELCOMING NEWCOMERS TO THE PONTIAC

LANGUAGE AND INTERCULTURAL RESOURCES TO KNOW ABOUT

To support French language learning, several French learning services are offered by the Ministry of Immigration, Francization and Integration (MIFI)⁶ as well as by local community organizations. Support workshops for newcomers are also offered by the Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi du Pontiac through their Place aux Jeunes program.⁷

The MIFI's practical guides on life in Quebec⁸ are very useful for intercultural education. Local cultural associations and groups, as well as exchange platforms such as citizen pairing or local sponsorship (Accueil-Parrainage de l'Outaouais service)⁹, promote meetups and discussions.

In addition, several digital tools facilitate communication, including translation applications such as Google Translate, DeepL, and Reverso, as well as free websites for learning French such as TV5MONDE Apprendre.¹⁰

Tip: A successful welcome is based on curiosity, listening, and mutual respect. The warmer and more regular the exchanges, the faster and more harmonious the integration.

[6. MIFI French Language Service](#)

[7. CJEP Place aux Jeunes](#)

[8. Quebec Practical Guide to MIFI](#)

[9. Accueil-Parrainage de l'Outaouais \(French\)](#)

[10. TV5Monde - Learn](#)



AVAILABLE RESOURCES

CARREFOUR JEUNESSE-EMPLOI DU PONTIAC (CJEP)

Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi du Pontiac (CJEP)

Personalized support, guidance, French language workshops, employment assistance.

80 Leslie Street, Campbell's Bay, in the Pontiac MRC

819 648-5065

<https://cjepontiac.ca/>

ACCUEIL-PARRAINAGE OUTAOUAIS

Offers intercultural mediation services to facilitate relations between people from different cultures.

124 Jeanne d'Arc Street, Gatineau, Quebec, J8Y 2H7

819 777-2960

direction@apo-qc.org

<https://apo-qc.org/>

EMPLOI-QUÉBEC

Guide to recruiting and integrating immigrant people.

Documents, tools, and subsidies to facilitate hiring and integration.

1 888 367-5647

quebec.emploi@mess.gouv.qc.ca

[Website](#)



AVAILABLE RESOURCES

MINISTRY OF IMMIGRATION, FRANCIZATION, AND INTEGRATION (MIFI)

Outaouais Regional Office:

The Outaouais Regional Office provides local services to immigrant people, businesses, and regional partners.

Email: dro@mifi.gouv.qc.ca

To contact the Ministry:

1-877-864-9191 (toll-free)

Quebec.ca/immigration

SERVICE INTÉGRATION TRAVAIL OUTAOUAIS (SITO)

A non-profit community organization whose mission is to contribute to the socio-professional inclusion of newly arrived French-speaking immigrant people in Quebec.

920 Saint-Joseph Boulevard, Suite 107, Gatineau, QC J8Z 1S9

819 776-2260

info@sito.qc.ca

Website



CONCLUSION AND CALL TO ACTION

In summary, welcoming a newcomer means giving them the opportunity to fit in, forge ties, and build a future in their new community. Whether it's helping them find housing, learn French, or simply sharing a coffee and a conversation, every gesture counts.

We invite you to join the Welcome to Our Home, Welcome to Your Home campaign and make your city a place where everyone feels welcome and supported. Together, let's make welcoming people an everyday reality.

For any questions or requests for support, contact the CJEP:

Phone: 819-648-5065

Address: 80 Leslie Street, Campbell's Bay, Pontiac MRC.

Download the media kit here: [Link to the media kit](#)