

MIGRANT WORKER INITIATIVES

After more than a decade engaging stakeholders around newcomers, immigrants and refugees, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has expanded the mandate of the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership (WE LIP) to officially include community efforts focusing on Migrant and Temporary Foreign Workers in our region.

Building on the work of WE LIP council member organizations, such as the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG), WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation, the municipalities of Kingsville and Leamington, and the Migrant Workers Community Program, WE LIP will engage in a number of initiatives that meet the mandate of improving services, promoting collaboration, strengthening social integration, and encouraging social and cultural connection. This involves not only including temporary foreign and migrant workers into the fold of current work, such as the COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on Marginalized Populations in Windsor Essex surveys that were conducted in the spring, but to engage in targeted work with a specific lens on needs of Migrant Workers in our community. Some of this work includes:

Stakeholder Engagement: Community Conversation – Migrant and Temporary Foreign Workers



WE LIP will work with IRCC, OGVG, and other local partners to host a Community Conversation to identify steps to create a more welcoming community for Migrant and Temporary Foreign Workers in Windsor-Essex. To this end, WE LIP reached out to Windsor-Tecumseh MP and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Irek Kusmierczyk, to act as chair of the Community Conversation. Mr. Kusmierczyk offered his full support to the project and expressed a strong interest in the outcomes of the Community Conversation, as well as the other migrant worker related projects.



Along with Mr. Kusmierczyk, the Community Conversation is supported by the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, WindsorEssex Economic Development, Service Canada, the Migrant Worker Community Program, South Essex Community Council, Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network, the Leamington District Chamber of Commerce, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Windsor-Essex Bilingual Legal Clinic, Workforce WindsorEssex, and the municipalities of Leamington, Kingsville, and Windsor.



In the first week of October, WE LIP will be hosting the first Steering Committee meeting to develop the blueprint for this event.

Stakeholder Engagement: Workplace Wellness for Agri-Workers Task Force

In a further effort to engage the community around migrant workers, WE LIP Council member organizations, the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU), and the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network (ESC LHIN) expressed an interest in creating a task force with the goal to co-develop a cross-sector collaboration in the community focused on improving health system response to Agri-worker health needs. The result was the development of the Workplace Wellness for Agri-Workers Task Force (WWAW). As an extension of the Health Working Group brought together by the OGVG and documented in the *“Building a Stronger, More Connected Kingsville-Leamington”* report, as well as the engagement done by WE LIP, ESC LHIN, and the subsequent Health Equity for Newcomer/Immigrant Committee (HENI), this task force comprises members from across Windsor-Essex who have important roles to play in Agri-worker health.

The Workplace Wellness for Agri-Workers Task Force is co-chaired by Allison Chandler, Outreach Worker with the Canadian Mental Health Association’s (CMHA) *On the Front Lines* initiative, and Sarah May Garcia, the Strategy and Implementation Lead with the ESC LHIN. The most recent meeting, on September 22, 2020 involved 18 participants representing fourteen different service providers and community groups, and involved the sharing of a number of partner initiatives - such as the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit’s [Healthy Workplace Awards](#), and the Canadian Mental Health Association’s [On the Front Lines](#) initiative - and discussion about how the Task Force can work as a support to the agricultural sector in ways that have a positive impact in the Agri-worker community.

Positive Messaging Campaign

WE LIP Council members organizations will also partner to create a positive messaging social media campaign to help reinforce the contribution that migrant workers make to the local economy and to the fabric of the community. Building on the work of OGVG’s Working Groups, in particular their Economic Working Group’s collaboration with the University of Windsor and Workforce WindsorEssex to conduct an impact study on migrant workers in our community, WE LIP will draw on these findings to develop the campaign with a commitment from partners to help amplify the message. Migrant workers contribute to the economic, social, and cultural fabric of the community and it is important that these positive impacts be highlighted and shared widely.

Workplace Wellness for Agri-Workers Task Force

Erie St. Clair Local Health
Integration Network

Canadian Mental Health
Association

Ontario Greenhouse
Vegetable Growers

Windsor Essex
Community Health
Centre

Windsor Essex Local
Immigration Partnership

Family Services Windsor-
Essex

South Essex Community
Council

Harrow Family Health
Team

Leamington Family
Health Team

VON Immigrant Health
Clinic

WindsorEssex Economic
Development
Corporation

Brady’s Pharmacy

Erie Shore HealthCare

Migrant Worker
Community Program

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Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

We Speak

An early success of the migrant worker initiatives was the important role the newly established We Speak interpretation initiative played for health partners operating the Agri-Food Worker COVID-19 Testing Centre in Leamington and Essex-Windsor EMS at the Isolation and Recovery Centre.

The We Speak initiative was born out of work done by Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership (WE LIP) in collaboration with the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network (ESC LHIN). Through engagement with newcomers and health service providers, the need to address language barriers within the health care system was identified.

The project team worked with Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services (MHCS) to develop a group purchase plan, allowing providers to access translation services at a discounted rate based on the group's usage. A central number was established, giving providers the ability to register their organization and gain access to scheduled or on demand translation services (in-person, by phone or video).

This initiative played an important role when COVID-19 started to effect migrant worker communities, and testing and healthcare outreach became paramount. "As a healthcare service, it is essential that individuals have information that is easy to understand and accessible. The ability to provide our services in the language most comfortable for our clients is critical to this goal. The We Speak video and on-demand interpretation options have allowed us to meet our clients needs when, and how they need them, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic." said Theresa Marentette, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Nursing Officer, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit.

During complex times We Speak has provided our service the ability to effectively communicate with clients where English was not their first language. In the past, language barriers created a large challenge during health assessments and hindered our ability to appropriately meet clients' needs in a timely manner. The translators are professional, easy to understand, patient, and very supportive.

*~Stacey Shepley
Captain, Professional Standards
Essex-Windsor EMS*

I was just introduced to We Speak virtual translation application and was incredibly impressed! The translator was professional, their interpretation of health conditions was accurate and the tool was incredibly easy to use. As the Executive Director of a Family Health Team, I feel We Speak provides reassurance to clinicians that they are understanding of the patients' health needs and providing them with comprehensive healthcare despite language barriers.

*~Margo Reilly
Executive Director
Harrow Health Centre*

Growing Our Team



To meet this growing mandate meant growing the WE LIP team. In August, WE LIP was happy to welcome Monica Champagne on board as Project Assistant. Raised in Windsor and Tecumseh, Monica left Windsor to pursue her BA from the University of Toronto, followed by an MA from Carleton University. She has worked for a number of years in Toronto as a fitness centre manager, but was excited to move back to Windsor with her young family to engage in the improved quality of life that Windsor-Essex offers. Most recently she has worked with WE LIP as a contributor to the African Community Organization of Windsor's *Building Bridges Across Differences* Project. Monica will focus her effort around the new migrant worker initiatives.

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