

Growing Communities:

The Economic and Social Impact of
Migrant and Temporary Foreign Workers
in Essex County
2021 -2022



 partenariat local d'immigration
windsor essex
local immigration partnership

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- Invest WindsorEssex**
- Migrant Worker Community Program**
- Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers**
- Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership**
- Workforce WindsorEssex**



Essex County, Ontario

The largest population of Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) in Canada can be found in Essex County. In a given year, the Migrant Worker Community Program estimates that up to 10,000 TFWs live and work in the area, helping to plant, maintain, harvest and process the ever-expanding greenhouse, agriculture, and agri-food industries.

To address the growing TFW populations in small rural communities, the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG) began a series of community engagements in 2018 and 2019 called "Building a Stronger, More Connected Kingsville-Leamington," which created a space for community partners to develop a strategy to support the integration of TFWs and offer them a welcoming and safe community where they could have an equal opportunity to participate in all the area has to offer.

Through these engagements, a series of eight (8) tables were formed to address the needs of TFW communities, such as language supports, health care, transportation, and an economic impact group tasked with developing a deeper understanding of the economic contributions TFWs make to the local economy.

While these tables were still in their infancy, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 shone a spotlight on the Temporary Foreign Workers in Essex County. As borders closed, questions emerged about the ability of TFWs to enter Canada to resume work. Seemingly overnight, these uncertainties threatened the local economies, food security, the larger agri-food economy, and other associated industries such as transportation, food processing, border services, among others. There were also very real concerns over the health and safety of the workers that were already here, the workers still in their home countries, and the community as a whole.



"At the Welcome Centre for migrant workers, we welcome them into the community. We show them hospitality, gratitude, & we say thank you for all they have done."

~Martin Varela, Chair, Migrant Worker Community Program

Find out more: bit.ly/3aPlpSg

#GrowingOurCommunity



11:53 AM · Feb 25, 2021 · Twitter Web App



¿Sabías tu?
A medida que crece la industria agroalimentaria local, también lo hacen las industrias asociadas como el transporte por carretera, el empaque, las tecnologías de la información, la contabilidad, etc.

Los trabajadores migrantes temporales nos ayudan a todos a crecer.

[Translate Tweet](#)



1:03 PM · Mar 26, 2021 · Twitter Web App

With COVID, it became clear that this essential workforce of highly skilled Migrant and Temporary Foreign Workers could not be easily replaced and local growers did not have the luxury of time to wait-and-see as the pandemic unfolded.

With the impact of COVID-19 on the TFW communities, and the many narratives around their importance to Essex County, the original economic impact table was expanded as the Economic and Social Impact of Temporary Foreign Workers Task Force, with the goal of continuing the research into the important economic and social contributions Temporary Foreign Workers make to communities like Leamington, Kingsville, Windsor, Essex, Harrow, Pelee Island, Amherstburg, and LaSalle.

The outcome of work is being used to inform a positive messaging social media campaign on Twitter and Facebook (@WindsorEssexLIP) with details and resources shared in this report. What this research has revealed is that TFWs have a broad impact on both Essex County and Canada-wide. From their contributions to their local economies through rent, food, retail, and entertainment spending, to broader contributions to social safety nets like Employment Insurance (EI) and the Canadian Pension Plan (CPP). TFWs help fill labour shortages in economies with traditionally large vacancy rates, and allow those industries to continue growing. They keep food supplies local, and secure what might otherwise be lost to imports. And even more important, they contribute to the cultural fabric of their new communities, sharing their skills, their history and their culture with their new neighbors, and sharing in ours in return.



"I think we can all acknowledge that the temporary foreign worker program has been a true staple, a part of our fabric here, that's helped support & strengthen our agricultural sector across Windsor Essex."

~Mayor
[@NSantos007](#)

[#GrowingOurEconomy](#)
[#GrowingOurCommunit](#)



10:03 AM · Apr 12, 2021 · Twitter Web App



"Thanks to Temporary Foreign Workers & their dedication to food production, we are able to secure an abundance of fresh produce for the Windsor Essex Food Bank Association right in our own backyard."

~June Muir, [@UHC_](#)

[#GrowingOurFood](#)
[#GrowingOurCommunity](#)



OGVG and 2 others

10:10 AM · Feb 4, 2021 · Twitter Web App

The Impact

Since 1966, The Government of Canada has allowed employers to hire foreign nationals to fill workforce gaps in agricultural occupations and activities related to agriculture through both the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) and the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). For the purposes of this report, the use of the term Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) includes workers in Canada through either program.

The following pages offer a snapshot of the economic and social importance of TFW work in Canada, Ontario, and Essex County.

The data and statistics for these pages were drawn from the resources cited, as well as those found on page 11.

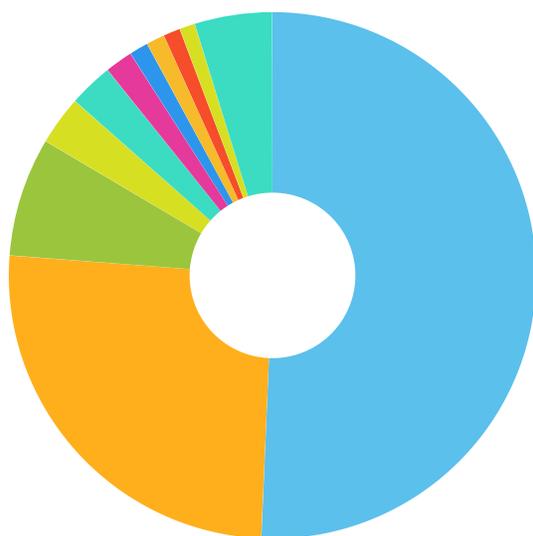
Due to periodic updates, some numbers in this release may differ from those reported previously.

LABOUR MARKET IMPACT REPORT

Before they can hire a TFW, employers **must complete a detailed Labour Market Impact Report (LMIA)** to prove that no Canadian worker or permanent resident is available to do the job, and the local labour market will not be negatively affected.

"What is a Labour Market Impact Assessment?"
<https://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=163&top=17>

Agricultural TFWs Country of Citizenship - Ontario - 2020



- Mexico (11,575)
- Jamaica (5,828)
- Guatemala (1,670)
- Thailand (684)
- Philippines (624)
- Trinidad & Tobago (387)
- Honduras (267)
- St. Vincent & the Grenadines (258)
- Ukraine (234)
- St. Lucia (219)
- Other (1,088)

"Countries of citizenship for temporary foreign workers in the agricultural sector" <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/189d9616-565a-46d4-a277-f0fe36312949>

Temporary Foreign Workers



100%
Healthcare

All TFWs have access to OHIP or other private insurance as part of their work permit *



9000
Workers

Estimated number of TFWs headed to Essex County in 2022 **



50 million
Spending

At an average of \$500/month, TFWs contribute approximately 50 million dollars per year to the local economies in Essex County***



100%
TFWs who contribute to payroll tax

All TFWs pay income tax, and contribute to social supports like Employment Insurance and the Canadian Pension Plan+.



80%
Retention

Up to 80% of TFWs return to the same farms and greenhouses year after year, contributing valuable skills and experience++

* The Migrant Worker Health Project, <http://www.migrantworkerhealth.ca/HealthcareGeneral.html>

** Based on IRCC's Global Case Management System (GCMS) and Employment and Social Development Canada's (ESDC) LMIA System. January 28, 2022. Numbers may differ due to periodic updates.

*** Martin Varela, Chair/ Presidente, Migrant Worker Community Program, Programa Comunitario para el Trabajador Migrante

+ The Migrant Worker Health Project, <http://www.migrantworkerhealth.ca/BackgroundWorkersGeneral.html#link4>

++ Sowing Growth with Canada's Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program, <https://cahrc-crrha.ca/sites/default/files/Emerging-Issues-Correspondence/1-SUMMARY-SAWPIntegrityFactSheet-Final%20Mar%202017.pdf>

Our Shared Vision

"Our communities are inclusive. We welcome, support, and appreciate the contributions of all residents – international and local. Our success is only possible because each person is supported by the workforce, organizations, and residents to contribute their diverse gifts to create a thriving community for all."

Case Study: How to Connect Diverse Leaders Around a Common Purpose: Collaborating towards a More Inclusive Leamington and Kingsville, Jack Gibbins and Galen MacLusky, Tamarack Institute, <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/case-study-connect-diverse-leaders-common-purpose> (February 28, 2022)



Agri-food Industry, Essex County



5%

The Agri-food Industry in Essex County has grown an average of 5% per year since 2016, outpacing other regions in Ontario.*



3 billion

In 2020, Essex County's Agri-food value chain was above 3 billion dollars.*



50,000+

Number of people employed by Agri-food industries in Essex County in 2019.*



53%

Over half of Greenhouse acres in Ontario are located in Essex County.**

* Economic Impact Analysis, Ontario Agri-food Value Chain: County (2012 - 2020) <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/stats/economy/index.html>

** County Profiles: Agriculture, Food and Business: Essex County, <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/stats/county/index.html>



Did you know?

The Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) and Temporary Foreign Worker Program operates according to a bilateral agreement between Canada and select participating countries.

In the agreement, these countries agree to help recruit and select workers, maintain a pool of qualified workers with farming experience, and make sure workers have all necessary documents to satisfy all Canadian immigration laws.

As well, countries agree to appoint representatives to assist their workers while in Canada.

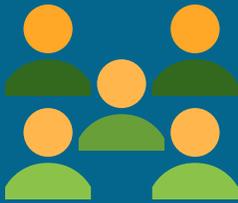
*Employment and Social Development Canada,
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/agricultural/seasonal-agricultural.html>

Agri-food Industry, Ontario and Canada



19 billion

In 2021, Ontario exported over 19 billion CDN dollars worth of Agri-food across the globe.*



24,000+

In 2021 Ontario hosted 24,410 TFWs in the agri-food sector.**



1 in 4

In Canada, 1 in 4 workers employed in crop production is a TFW. In Ontario that number is 1 in 3.+



7%

Job vacancy rate in agri-food industries, highest of any in Canada, resulting in \$1.5-billion in lost sales.++

* International Trade: Agri-food by region, <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/stats/trade/index.html>

** Canada - Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) work permit holders by province/territory of intended destination, program and year in which permit(s) became effective, January 2015 - December 2021, <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/360024f2-17e9-4558-bfc1-3616485d65b9>

+ The Distribution of temporary foreign workers across industries in Canada, Yugian Lu, June 3, 2020, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00028-eng.htm>

++ Sowing Growth with Canada's Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program, <https://cahrc-ccrha.ca/sites/default/files/Emerging-Issues-Correspondence/1-SUMMARY-SAWPIntegrityFactSheet-Final%20Mar%202017.pdf>

Next Steps

As the data makes clear, Temporary Foreign Workers are not only a vital part of Essex County communities, but of Canada as a whole. They contribute valuable skills and experience to grow local economies, the agri-food economies, ensure food security, and contribute to both the social fabric and social safety nets that help us all thrive.

And while the importance of Temporary Foreign Workers cannot be overstated, the program, its implementation, and oversight have not been without challenges. Concerns about appropriate housing and accommodations, the exploitation of undocumented workers, and the ability to provide appropriate physical and mental healthcare to workers have been consistent issues made more pressing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To this end, in October 2020 the Government of Canada sent out a survey to employers, workers, and community stakeholders to inform standardized housing requirements for workers. As well, following the deaths of three Temporary Foreign Workers from COVID-19 in 2020, the Office of the Chief Coroner and Ontario Forensic Pathology Service made a series of 35 recommendations to improve the experiences and outcomes of workers going forward.

Appreciating that TFWs are an essential and skilled workforce, in April 2021, then Minister of Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Marco Mendicino, announced that the Government of Canada would open up a new pathway to permanent residency for 30,000 new essential worker applicants, including Agri-workers. This is on the heels of IRCC's expanded mandate in 2020 to include TFWs in the work of select local immigration partnerships. This report is a result of this expanded mandate.

 WE LIP
@WindsorEssexLIP

"We as a community...need to put our arms around everyone who lives here, who works here, who plays here, & that is how we are looking going forward."

~Mayor @HildaMacDonald

#GrowingOurFood
#GrowingOurCommunity



4:30 PM - Mar 11, 2021 - Twitter Web App

 WE LIP
@WindsorEssexLIP

"I don't think the greenhouse industry would exist if it wasn't for the farm worker program. There just wouldn't be the manpower to make it happen. The program is of ultimate importance."

#GrowingOurFood
#GrowingOurEconomy

bit.ly/3v8lrCH



6:27 PM - Mar 15, 2021 - Twitter Web App

Windsor and Essex County has also seen renewed efforts to engage and improve the quality of life for TFW communities, with large groups of stakeholders coming together to coordinate TFW COVID-19 vaccination clinics, engage with community groups like the Migrant Worker Community Program and C.A.R.E. for International Workers, and hold community conversations to develop a locally informed action plan to help TFWs better integrate and enjoy their new communities.

It is the hope that these community efforts, founded on partnerships and the facilitation of shared goals, can stand as a model to other regions in Ontario as they work to do better at welcoming, supporting, and appreciating the important contributions all the Temporary Foreign Worker communities make to their regions and to the province.



57%

of TFW Work Permits in Canada focused on the labour market needs of farms, nurseries, and greenhouses.

"CIMM - Temporary Foreign Worker Program"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/committees/cimm-mar-10-2021/cimm-temporary-foreign-worker-program-10-2021.html>



Select Resources

Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council: https://cahrc-ccrha.ca/sites/default/files/Impacts%20of%20COVID-19%20on%20agriculture_Final%2030Mar.pdf

Canadian Federation of Agriculture: <https://www.cfa-fca.ca/issues/temporary-foreign-worker-program-and-canadian-agriculture/>

Deputy Chief Coroner's Review: COVID-19 Related Deaths of Temporary Foreign Agricultural Workers in 2020:

<https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/Deathinvestigations/OfficeChiefCoroner/Publicationsandreports/TFAW2020.html>

Invest WindsorEssex: <https://www.investwindsorsex.com/en/why-windsorsex/leamington.aspx>

Migrant Worker Community Program: <https://www.migrantworkercommunityprogram.com/english>

Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Growers' Association: <https://www.ofvga.org/article/issues-background-importance-of-seasonal-and-temporary-foreign-agricultural-workers-to-ontario>

Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers: <https://www.ogvg.com/foreign-worker-program>

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/stats/trade/index.html>

The School of Public Policy, University of Calgary: <https://www.policyschool.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Family-Farmers-Falconer.pdf>

Service Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers.html>

Statistics Canada: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/>

Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership & Workforce WindsorEssex:

www.workforcewindsorsex.com/migrant-and-temporary-foreign-worker-initiatives.

Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Growers' Association: <https://www.ofvga.org/article/issues-background-importance-of-seasonal-and-temporary-foreign-agricultural-workers-to-ontario>



