

Toronto Newcomer Strategy

Helping Newcomers Thrive and Prosper



Toronto Newcomer Strategy

VISION

All newcomers reach their full potential to thrive and contribute to their local neighbourhood, community and city, ensuring Toronto's continued success and prosperity.

MISSION

Advance the successful settlement and integration of all newcomers to Toronto through a seamless, responsive and accountable human services system.





CONTENTS

Introduction 7

Background 10

Newcomer Leadership Table 14

Local Immigration Partnerships 17

Strategic Pillars 21

Strategy Recap 32

Appendix: Newcomer Settlement Challenges 34



INTRODUCTION

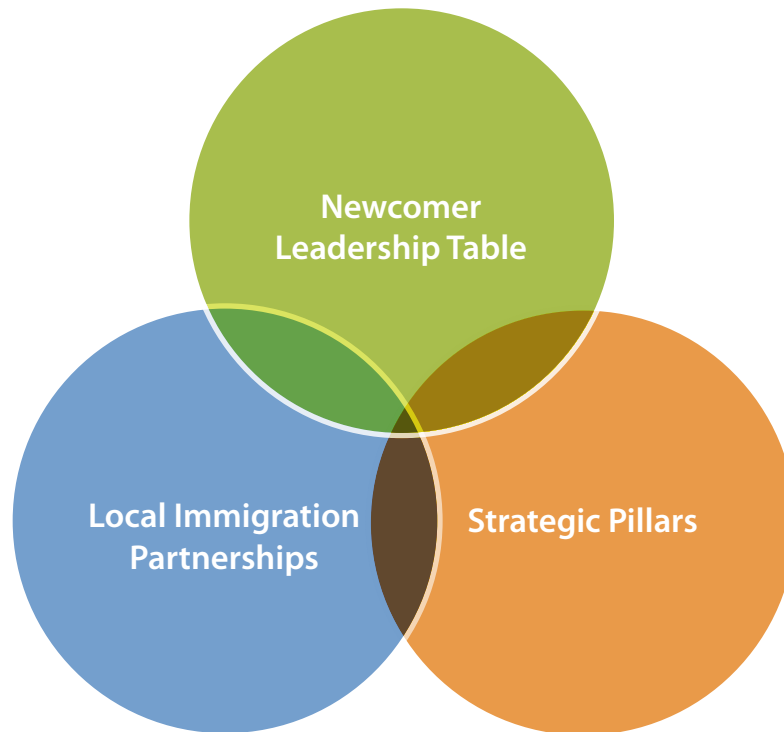
Toronto is one of the most multicultural urban areas in the world. Each year tens of thousands of people from around the globe choose our city as their new home. Their diverse cultures and communities have helped create Toronto's identity as a vibrant global city.

Toronto has a comprehensive set of resources in place to help newcomers settle and integrate. However they can be difficult to access. Many newcomers are unaware of all the supports available to help them when they need it most. As a result, many face difficulties integrating into the city's social, economic and cultural landscape.

The Toronto Newcomer Strategy is designed to improve newcomer settlement through shared leadership, stronger collaboration and a more seamless and well-coordinated service system.

Strategic Approach

There are three components to the Toronto Newcomer Strategy: the Newcomer Leadership Table, Local Immigration Partnerships and Strategic Pillars.



The Toronto Newcomer Strategy Secretariat (TNS Secretariat) funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada coordinates activities for each component and links the overlaps.

Guiding Principles

There are five guiding principles for the Toronto Newcomer Strategy:

Foster partnerships, collaboration and accountability

Enable shared leadership

Utilize complementary knowledge and skills

Nurture and support change agents

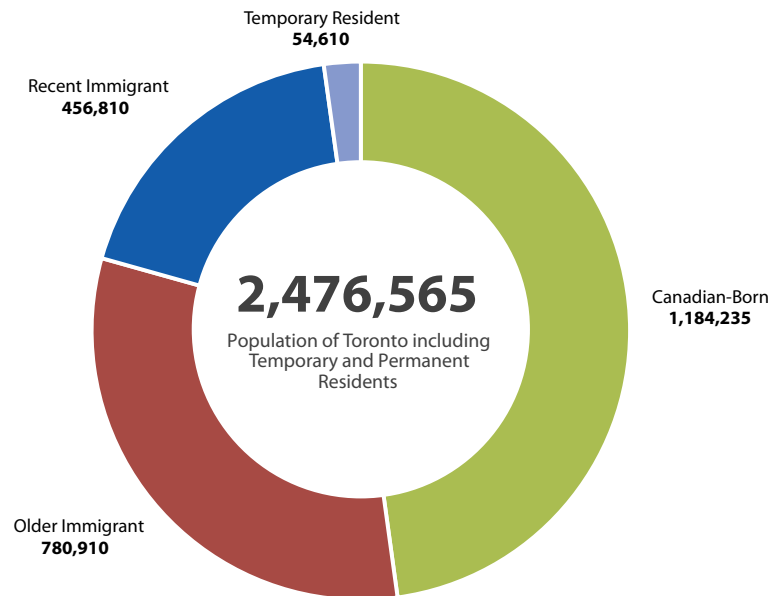
Promote dignity, equality and fairness

BACKGROUND

Toronto is an extremely diverse city, with over half of its residents born outside Canada. Information about Toronto's newcomer demographics is available through Wellbeing Toronto at www.toronto.ca/wellbeing. This interactive website allows users to create maps, tables and graphs about Toronto's populations and services.

- Nearly 500,000 city residents have been here less than ten years
- Toronto residents come from 188 countries and speak 140 different languages

Components of Toronto's Population (2006 Census)



18%

are recent immigrants (less than 10 years)

49%

have non-English/French mother tongues

140+

number of different languages spoken in Toronto

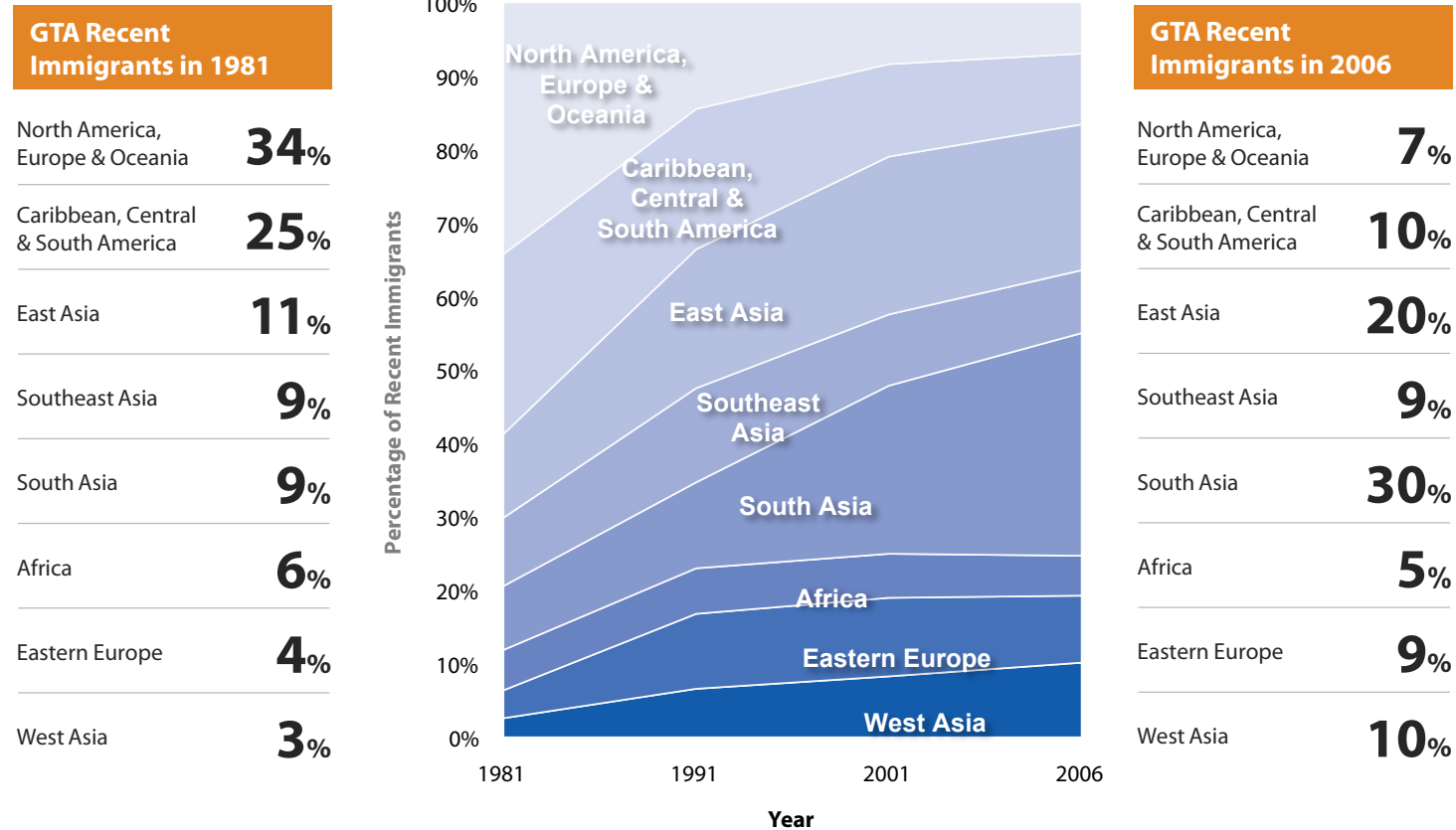
188

number of different birth countries of recent immigrants

In the 2006 Census, permanent residents are counted as "immigrants"

Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

Birth Countries of Recent Immigrants (Greater Toronto Area)



"Recent immigrant" is defined as having arrived in Canada within 10 years of each census date and includes permanent residents. Data are for the Toronto CMA. Source: *Immigrants in Canada's Census Metropolitan Areas* (Schellenberg, 2004); Statistics Canada 2006 Census

The current top three source countries of immigrants to Toronto are China, India and the Philippines. 30 years ago, most immigrants came from Europe, North America, the Caribbean and Central America.



Newcomers demonstrate resilience, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit.

Newcomer Experiences

Even in a city as diverse and welcoming as Toronto, immigration can be a challenging experience. Newcomers may be coming from difficult circumstances such as war and violence. Others may arrive from countries with very different political systems, civic institutions and services. To successfully integrate into their new environment, newcomers demonstrate resilience, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit, while overcoming many hurdles along the way.

They first come in contact with the local government and community-based organizations after their arrival to Canada. Municipalities play an important role in supporting newcomers as providers of transit, child care, affordable housing and many other essential services.ⁱ

The City of Toronto provides services to all residents regardless of immigration status, except where mandated by other orders of government.

The funders (federal and provincial governments) and providers of services (municipal government and community-based organizations) share leadership for settlement and service integration planning.

Consultations with residents and service providers in communities across Toronto revealed that the service system can be improved to better help newcomers:

- **find skill-appropriate employment**
- **maintain good health**
- **secure affordable child care**
- **arrange for safe, quality housing**
- **obtain language and education training**
- **navigate the transit system**
- **participate in recreation and cultural activities**

Read more about newcomer settlement challenges in the Appendix.

Newcomer Leadership Table Membership

Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture
Catholic Crosscultural Services
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
City of Toronto

- Children's Services
- City Manager's Office
- Economic Development and Culture
- Employment and Social Services
- Office of Equity, Diversity and Human Rights
- Social Development, Finance and Administration
- Toronto Public Health

COSTI Immigrant Services
For Youth Initiative
George Brown College
JobStart

JVS Toronto
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
Ontario Trillium Foundation
St. Stephen's Community House
Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office
Toronto Hospital for Sick Children
Toronto Catholic District School Board
Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network
Toronto District School Board
Toronto Community Housing Corporation
Toronto Regional Immigrant Employment Council
United Way Toronto
Warden Woods Community Centre
Working Women Community Centre
YMCA Toronto

*membership as of printing date

NEWCOMER LEADERSHIP TABLE

The Newcomer Leadership Table (NLT) brings together leaders from all three orders of government, the community-based sector as well as institutions such as hospitals and school boards, to share information and take action on system-wide issues that affect newcomers and their successful settlement in Toronto.

Successful settlement and integration of newcomers cannot be achieved by one sector alone. The mandate of the NLT is to take action on a range of interconnected issues that affect newcomers and their successful integration. For example, securing good housing helps newcomers maintain their health, while accessing child care and transit are essential to attending training, job placements and language classes.

The NLT is co-chaired by the City of Toronto's Social Development, Finance & Administration Division, United Way Toronto and the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI).



Creating stronger partnerships for newcomer success

LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS

Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) were launched by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) initially in Ontario and now across Canada. They provide a collaborative framework to facilitate the development and implementation of sustainable solutions for the successful integration of newcomers to Ontario that are local and regional in scopeⁱⁱ.

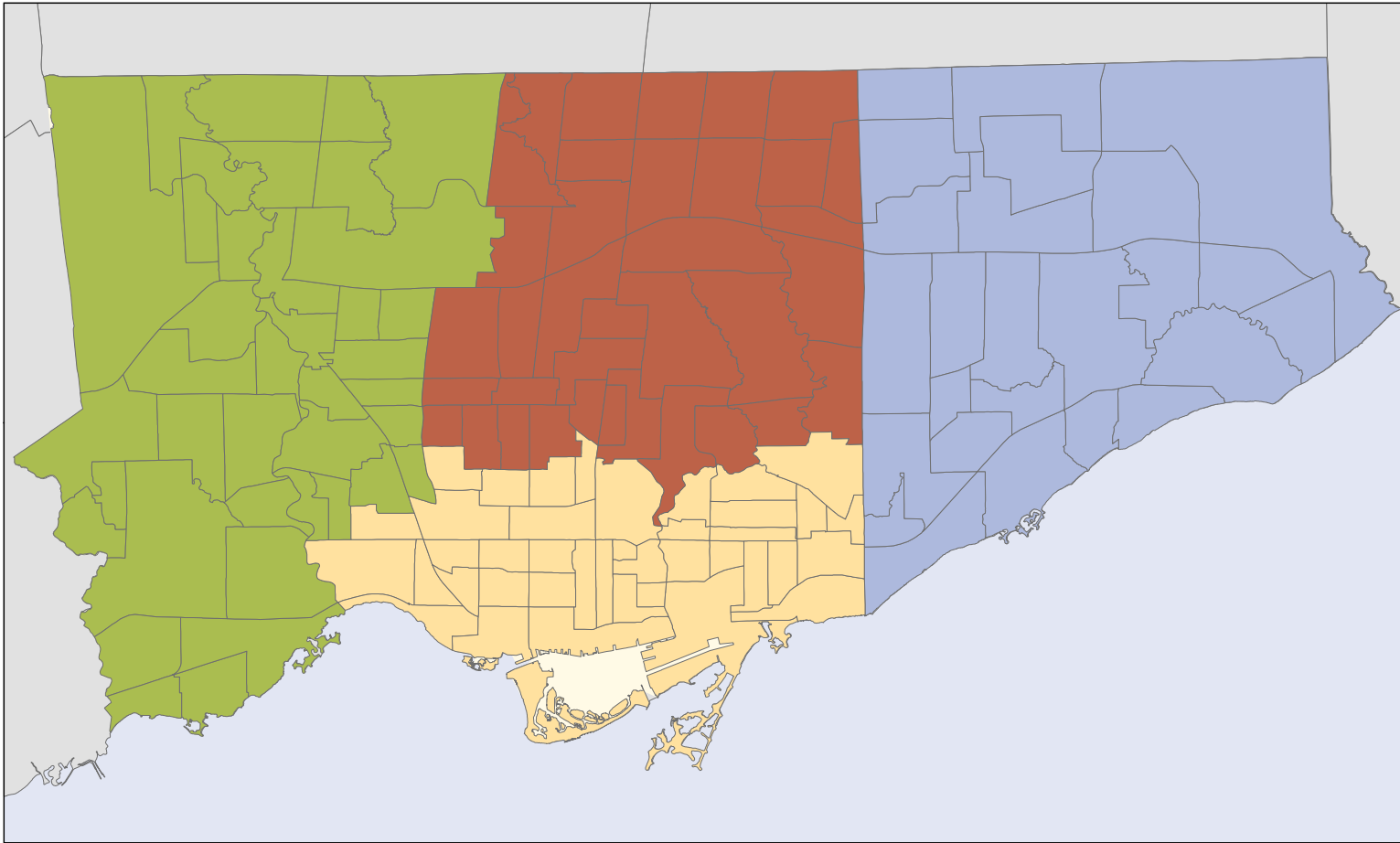
LIPs are mandated to:

- facilitate a partnership council of multi-sectoral leaders
- develop and implement strategic action plans that reflect local priorities

LIPs in Toronto

LIPs in Toronto were originally established as 17 neighbourhood-based local planning tables in 2009. Each LIP focused on neighbourhoods with high numbers of newcomer residents. Toronto's neighbourhood-based LIPs transitioned to a new quadrant model on April 1st 2012. With this change, each of Toronto's 140 neighbourhoods belongs to one of the four quadrant-based LIPs. More information about quadrant LIPs can be found at www.toronto.ca/newcomer.

Toronto Quadrant Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)



Legend

- Toronto West
- Toronto North
- Toronto South
- Toronto East



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Source: City of Toronto; Social Policy Analysis & Research; Community Funding Programs Unit.

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Contact: spar@toronto.ca

Toronto's Unique Model

There are now five LIPs in Toronto. This is unique because other municipalities have a single LIP model led by local government.

Of the five LIPs in Toronto, four are based on geographic areas and are facilitated by community organizations. They each focus on the unique needs and priorities of their quadrant.

The fifth partnership has a city-wide focus and is overseen by the City of Toronto.

Toronto LIP Network

All five LIPs in Toronto form a collaborative network that meets to:

- share information and tools
- highlight opportunities for collaboration
- enhance the coordination of community-led activities
- identify emerging issues and findings

Shared Leadership

There are more than 1.3 million immigrants in Toronto. This is more than the total population of Calgary.

Shared leadership between community organizations and the City of Toronto is essential, given the city's size and demographics.

Over 200 community-based agencies, funded by all three levels of government, provide a variety of supports to newcomers in Toronto and are linked to at least one of Toronto's five LIPs.



Working together to build a stronger Toronto

STRATEGIC PILLARS

The successful settlement and integration of newcomers depend on a range of socio-economic factors. The following strategic pillars address many of these factors and support the mission and vision of the Toronto Newcomer Strategy. The pillars are interconnected and overlay with current City of Toronto priorities and initiatives.





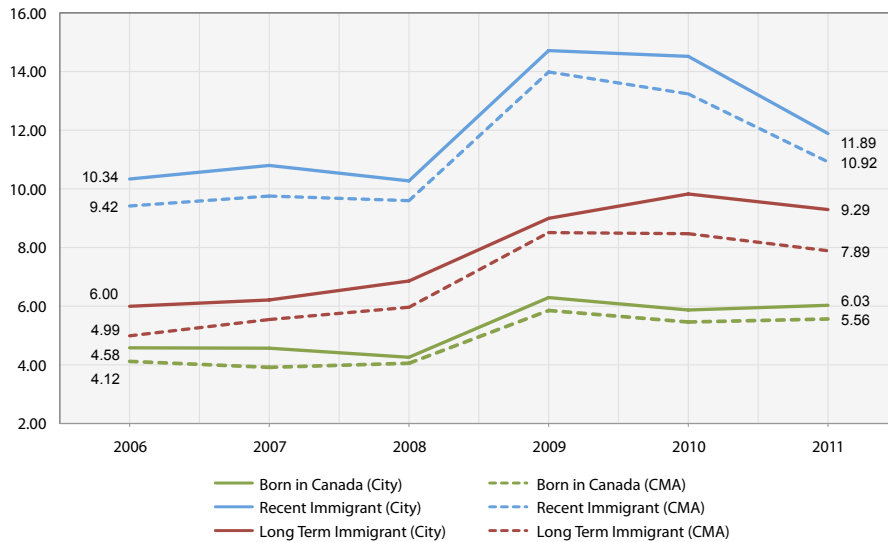
Newcomers face barriers to suitable employment

ADVANCING NEWCOMER LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

Since the 1960's, the Canadian immigration system has focused on attracting large numbers of highly-skilled workers. In 2010 alone, the country accepted more than 660,000 permanent and temporary workers from abroad. Newcomers complement the skills of the domestic labour force, bring new investment and innovative practices, help to open trade routes with their countries of origin and enhance cultural diversityⁱⁱⁱ.

That being said, newcomers face challenges compared to long term immigrants and Canadian born residents. For example, after the 2008 recession Toronto's overall unemployment rate climbed to 9%, but the rate was significantly higher (14%) for newcomers during the same period.

Unemployment Rate of Working Population (25-64)
By Immigrant Status (2006-2011)



Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Surveys, 2006-2011



Employment Barriers

Statistics since 2006 show that a disproportionate number of newcomers living in Toronto are either not getting jobs or are in jobs that do not match their qualifications^{iv}.

Newcomer barriers to suitable employment include:

- lack of Canadian experience or credentials
- language challenges
- ineligibility for certain employment-related services
- lack of networking opportunities with employers

In Toronto, there are many successful programs and supports that assist newcomers to reach their employment goals. They are delivered by universities, community colleges, nonprofit agencies and the City. However, research from both community-based organizations and the for-profit sector identifies the need for greater coordination and integration of employment services for newcomers^v.



Research shows that many employers lack tools or ability to effectively assess foreign education, certifications and work experience

Working as One

The City of Toronto recognizes the need for greater coordination in workforce development and is taking an active leadership role. In 2012, Toronto Employment and Social Services released *Working as One: A Workforce Development Strategy* for Toronto.

Read more about Working as One at www.toronto.ca/workone/

The strategy was designed to enhance the employment service system to mutually benefit employers and jobseekers^{vi}. It focuses on actions to support newcomers and youth, two groups who are underemployed in Toronto. Implementation of the strategy will happen in conjunction with the *Economic Growth Plan, 2012-2014*^{vii} and the *Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020* (TSNS 2020)^{viii}.

Taking Action

To build on the existing strategies and advance newcomer labour market outcomes, the TNS Secretariat will work with City and external partners to:

- conduct new and ongoing research to identify and promote promising practices
- nurture and support newcomer-focused labour market partnerships



Accessible health services maintain the newcomer health advantage

PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING GOOD HEALTH

National and provincial research shows that newcomers are healthier than Canadian-born residents when they first arrive to Canada. They have lower rates of heart disease, cancer and mental health problems^{ix}.

However, newcomers experience a decline in their health due to the stress associated with migration, settlement and adaptation. High rates of unemployment, discrimination, social isolation, housing insecurity and barriers to health and other services also contribute to their declining health over time^x.

The Global City

The Global City: Newcomer Health in Toronto, released in 2011, is the first comprehensive report on newcomer health in Toronto.

It identifies health as a settlement issue, and highlights that most newcomers arrive in Toronto in good health but lose that health advantage over time.

Read *The Global City report* at www.toronto.ca/health/map/newcomer.htm



There is a pressing need to improve access to primary healthcare and culturally competent services

Barriers to Good Health

Newcomers have diverse health needs based on their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethno-racial identity, migration experience, income level and education.^{xi}

They also experience multiple barriers to the healthcare system, including:

- cost and eligibility
- cultural and linguistic challenges
- limited cultural competence of service providers
- lack of awareness of services
- shortage of physicians and accessible services

These barriers can lead to more serious health problems and greater costs for the healthcare system in the long run^{xii}.

The Global City report recommends that more equitable, culturally sensitive health services (both preventative and primary care) be provided to diverse groups of newcomers with varied health issues, risks and needs^{xiii}.

Taking Action

To address these challenges and act on the findings of the Global City report, the TNS Secretariat, Toronto Public Health and other City and external partners will work together to:

- enhance collaboration between the health and settlement sectors
- facilitate new partnerships to address the social determinants of health
- develop and implement programs and policies focused on newcomer health

IMPROVING ACCESS TO MUNICIPAL SUPPORTS

In 2010 the City of Toronto launched a program called the Toronto Newcomer Initiative (TNI) in order to improve City policies and programming for newcomers. The initiative consisted of six pilot projects. Findings from these projects informed the Toronto Newcomer Strategy. Read more about the pilot projects in the TNI Program Report found at www.toronto.ca/newcomer.

The TNI pilot projects identified that newcomers are not well informed about City services^{xiv}. Greater collaboration between City divisions and agencies, boards and commissions will streamline information and improve access to programs and services to help newcomers engage more with the City.

Taking Action

The TNS Secretariat will work with City and external partners to:

- promote the inclusion of a newcomer lens in the development and implementation of City programs and policies
- leverage City resources to enhance newcomer access to information and City services

City of Toronto Immigration Portal

The provincial government funds municipal immigration web portals across Ontario. These websites provide newcomers with reliable information about all aspects of their immigration journey.

In 2011, the City of Toronto revamped its immigration web portal to improve usability and provide up-to-date information. This tool can be used by all stakeholders to improve newcomer access to municipal and other supports. Visit www.toronto.ca/immigration

SUPPORTING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY CAPACITY

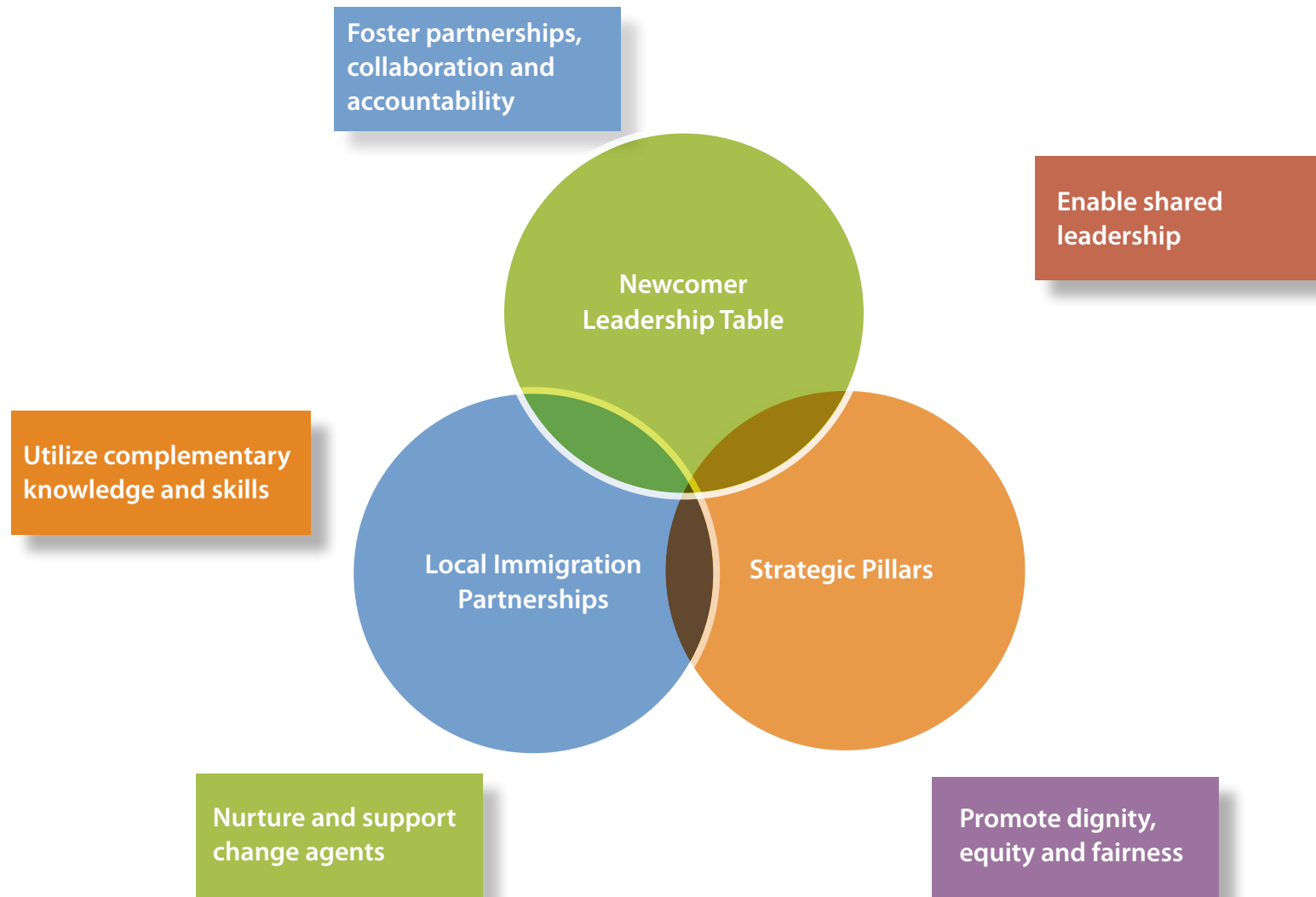
The community-based LIPs and the TNI pilot projects identified the need to strengthen the capacity of community organizations to respond to newcomer needs. Under this pillar the City will collaborate with community partners who are helping newcomers to learn about local, provincial and federal governance and legislative processes. Newcomers will be empowered to become an active part of our community when they are shown how to engage with elected officials, participate in public consultations and connect to their neighbourhood networks.

Taking Action

The TNS Secretariat will work with both City and external partners to:

- support greater newcomer participation in City processes
- build the capacity of community-based organizations by providing information, research and training

STRATEGY RECAP



Moving Forward

The City of Toronto will continue to provide leadership during the implementation of the Toronto Newcomer Strategy. Collaboration among diverse stakeholders is essential to achieving the strategy's mission and vision.

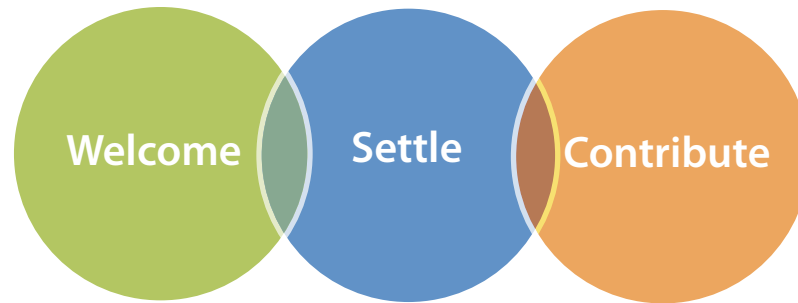
The Newcomer Leadership Table will meet four times a year to begin tackling the complex and interconnected challenges that many newcomers face.

All five LIPs in Toronto will collaborate through its network of project teams. They will share information and tools, enhance the coordination of their respective activities and inform the work of other elements of the Strategy.

The Strategic Pillars remain a core focus. To take action, the City and its partners will:

- conduct new and ongoing research
- support labour market and health partnerships
- enhance multi-sectoral collaboration
- promote the inclusion of a newcomer lens in programs and policies
- leverage City resources to enhance access to information and services
- enable greater newcomer participation in City processes
- build the capacity of community-based organizations

For more information and updates, continue to visit www.toronto.ca/newcomer.



Appendix Newcomer Settlement Challenges

APPENDIX: NEWCOMER SETTLEMENT CHALLENGES

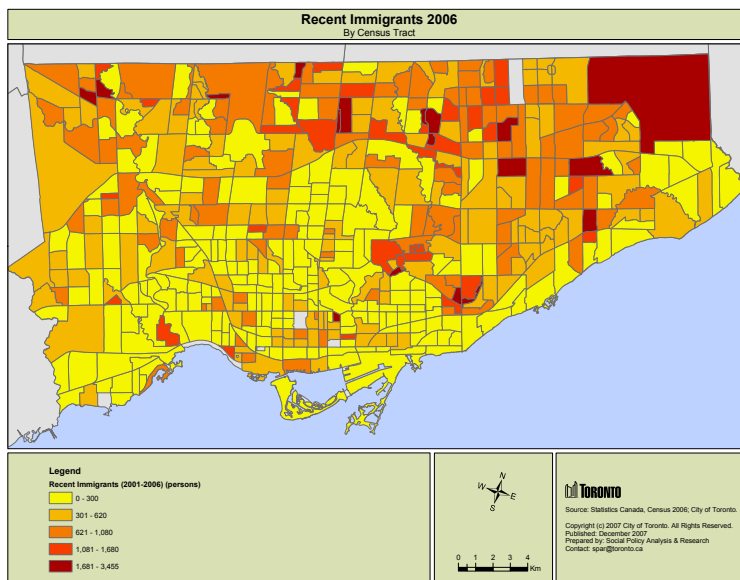
Public Transit	36
Child Care	37
Housing	38
Education and Training	39
Language Supports	42
Recreation and Sports	44
Cultural Integration	47

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Toronto has the biggest public transit system across all of Canada. Over 450 million TTC trips were taken in the city in 2011, and this is expected to rise to 528 million rides in 2013.

Transit cuts and service reductions across the city have primarily affected Toronto suburbs where most newcomers live. The areas of the city where routes are fewest and transit wait-times longest are areas with the highest numbers of recent immigrants.

Reliable public transit plays a crucial role in the overall wellbeing and prosperity of the city, connecting Toronto residents to jobs, to important services and to new neighbourhoods and communities.



Recent immigrants are twice as likely to use public transit as their Canadian-born counterparts.

CHILD CARE

When newcomer parents first arrive to Toronto, finding child care is often their first step to securing employment, improving English or upgrading qualifications.

In 2006, over half of all households with children aged 0 to 12 in Toronto were recent immigrants.

Child care centres and schools are often the first social institutions that newcomer families access in their new country. Teachers and child care providers can be an important source of information and support for both children and parents.

Navigating child care options, costs and subsidies in the city is not easy for most residents. It can be even more difficult for newcomer parents. Language barriers, eligibility criteria and limited child care spaces prevent some newcomers from quickly finding a child care centre.



QUALITY HOUSING

Rents and house prices in Toronto are among the highest in Canada. Paying for rent or a mortgage is often the biggest monthly expense for residents. In the Greater Toronto Area, finding a clean, safe and affordable place to live can be a challenge.

While it can be a struggle for many people to find affordable housing in the city, some newcomers face a number of additional challenges. Newcomers without Canadian employment or banking-history can have trouble finding landlords in the city who are willing to rent to them. Language barriers can make it harder to buy property, search for housing and understand rental and lease agreements.

Local community agencies, community centres and libraries offer resources and run workshops to help inform newcomers about their housing rights and housing services. Settlement workers in schools and other organizations also connect newcomer clients to housing supports as requested.

Housing Opportunities Toronto

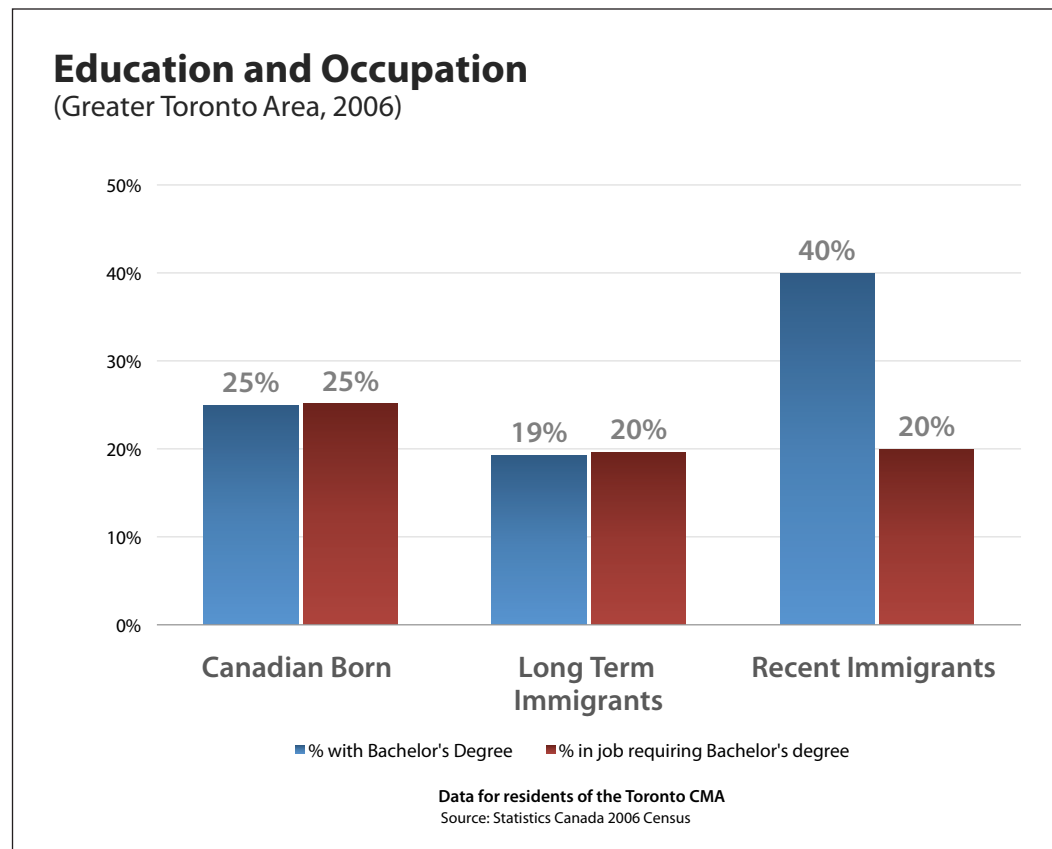
In 2010, the City published Housing Opportunities Toronto, a ten-year plan to help all residents find affordable housing in the city. While it does not directly target newcomers, the City does outline a commitment to address housing discrimination, to provide funding for increased housing assistance to at-risk households and to provide training to strengthen capacity of housing-provider boards and staff. These and other actions point towards positive change for all residents in Toronto, including newcomers.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CREDENTIALING

Toronto receives over 75,000 immigrants every year, many with high levels of education and years of work experience. When newcomers first arrive, finding a place to live, schools for children or adjusting to new surroundings is often the immediate concern. As they settle, education and skills-development become a priority.

Many newcomers hold PhDs, Masters Degrees and professional certifications from other countries.

In fact, recent immigrants are almost twice as likely as their Canadian-born counterparts to hold a third level qualification. However, differing graduation requirements and expectations in professional fields prevent many qualified newcomers from working in their occupations.



Updating Skills

Newcomers choose to update education or skills given that their qualifications are not often fully recognized. However, they face barriers to access the appropriate opportunities while continuing to pay rent and feed their families.

Newcomer parents with young children also need to consider child care costs when thinking about returning to school. Recent immigrants can struggle to apply for financial assistance and other supports, without knowledge of what exactly they are entitled to.

Even when these challenges are overcome and newcomer adults successfully enroll, they are generally ineligible to access the supports offered to international students.



Going to School

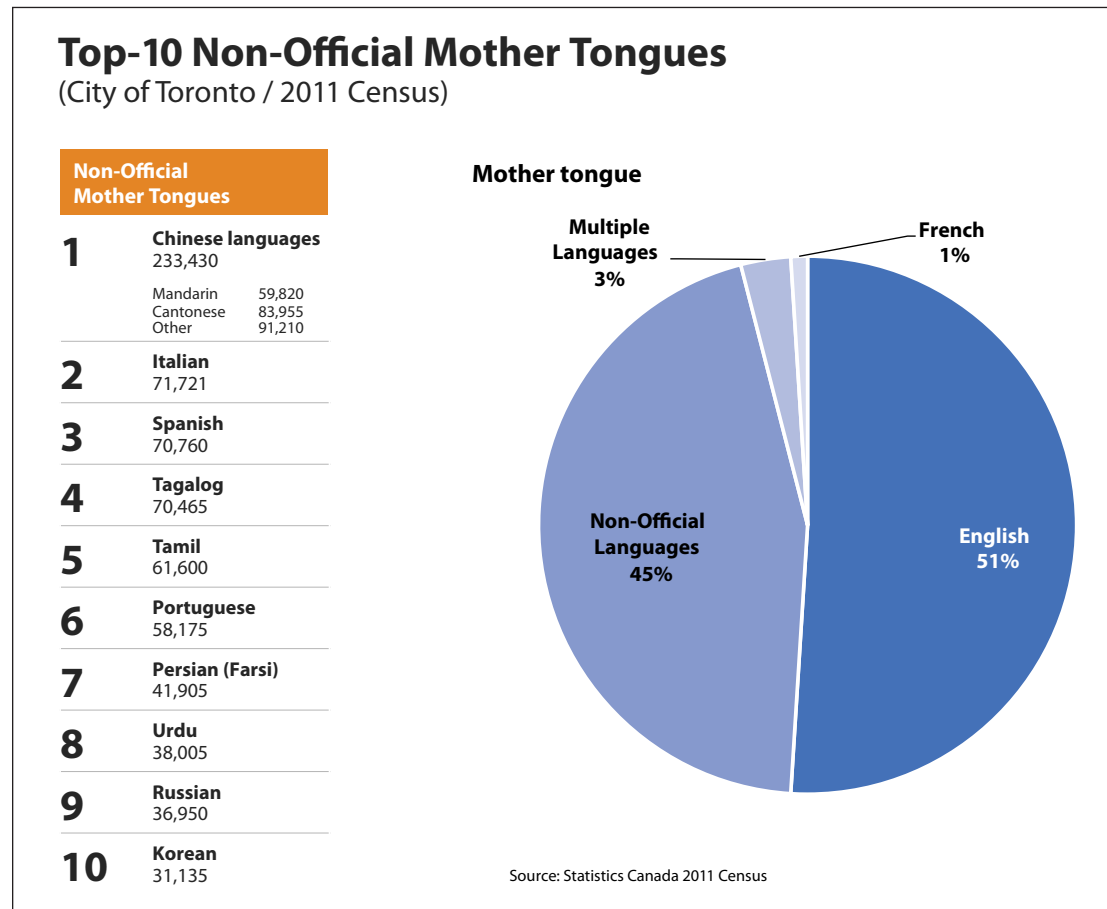
Newcomer families sometimes experience challenges with the elementary and secondary school system in Toronto. Language barriers can impact parent understanding about how the education system works and what supports are available through schools. Newcomer parents can struggle with different expectations and understandings of education. Lack of information about enrollment, procedures and Canadian school culture can create a barrier between them and their children's education and learning experiences.

Newcomer children and youth also struggle at times. If English is not their first language, it may be difficult for them to keep up with other students. Cultural differences can make it harder to find friends and get involved in extracurricular activities. Finding volunteer hours to graduate can be challenging to newcomer students with low-level English. The experience of being a new student in Toronto can feel overwhelming, leaving many young newcomers confused and isolated, and with no social network for support.



LANGUAGE SUPPORTS

Toronto is home to immigrants from over 188 countries, most of whom do not speak English or French as a first language. The 2011 Census shows that almost half of Toronto's population speaks a non-official language as their mother tongue.



The top languages spoken in Toronto are Mandarin, Cantonese, Italian, Spanish, Tagalog and Tamil.

There are many opportunities in Toronto for newcomers to learn and improve their English. Services are provided by a range of funders and organizations, such as federal and provincial governments, school boards, community groups and others.

Barriers to Accessing Language Supports

Research findings show that recent immigrants often don't know how to connect to a language program that suits their learning and accessibility needs. For those that do, classes sometimes conflict with working hours or have strict eligibility criteria which prevent their participation.

Lack of child care and travel reimbursement may prevent some newcomers from accessing classes. In addition, newcomers regularly report that available English programs do not help them gain the language skills they need for everyday life.

Translation and translated materials are crucial for newcomers with limited English skills to navigate services in the city and find the help and resources they need. Translation services are sometimes offered in places like hospitals, medical offices, legal clinics and settlement organizations.

Funding for these services is inconsistent and can vary widely from place to place. Sometimes organizations rely on unqualified staff and volunteers to communicate with newcomer clients. This can lead to incorrect information, confusion and loss of confidence in the system by newcomers. Greater coordination and accountability can help improve these services.



RECREATION AND CULTURE

Toronto has a rich arts and culture scene. The City hosts many annual festivals that display and celebrate its diversity. There are also many museums, art galleries and historic centres that illustrate Toronto's history and the talents of its past and present residents.

The City has a wide range of recreation programs and activities through neighbourhood parks and centres and is home to numerous community groups that organize outings and adventures within and beyond the city limits.



Helping Newcomers Get Involved in Recreation

Being involved in cultural or recreational activities is a great way for people to learn about the city and become part of the diversity and creativity that makes Toronto such an attractive place to live. It can also help relieve stress, improve physical health and help people make friends and become connected to new communities.

Research shows that many newcomers in Toronto do not make recreation activities or cultural outings a priority. Recent immigrants struggle with the stress of finding work and adjusting to the differences of everyday life in their new home. Many feel they do not have the time or energy for recreational activities or cultural outings.

Cost is a significant barrier to newcomer use of cultural institutions and recreational facilities. Museums, galleries and historic centres often charge entrance fees that may be too expensive for newcomer families. Even within their own neighbourhoods, newcomers sometimes struggle to find culturally inclusive recreation programs and activities. Many free or low-cost activities and programs in recreation centres and libraries have long waiting lists or do not provide language and child care supports. The City's recently released Recreation Service Plan (2012)^{xv} provides opportunity to enhance recreational programs for newcomers.



Developing a sense of community is an important part of feeling at home

CULTURAL INTEGRATION

When people immigrate to Canada, they leave friends and members of their family behind. Newcomers can struggle with adjusting to a new country, climate and culture, often with nobody to talk to when they feel stressed, lonely or sad.

Building friendships and developing a sense of community is an important part of feeling at home. Increased opportunities for volunteer work, skill-development classes, physical and social activities help people from Canadian and other cultures come together, learn from each other and develop new friendships.

However, priorities for newcomers include looking for work, looking after children and trying to adjust, leaving little time to socialize and meet new people.

Newcomers who reach out to connect with other people can face challenges around language and cultural differences. People with different cultural backgrounds can have diverse social expectations and practices, and it can take time to build trust and connections. Many newcomers find it easier to develop friendships and connections with people from the same culture or country instead. Research shows that newcomers in Toronto need more opportunities and support to make cross-cultural connections to integrate into their new life in Canada. Community-based organizations are at the forefront of providing these opportunities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE TORONTO NEWCOMER STRATEGY

Contact

Sonali Chakraborti
Social Policy, Analysis and Research
Social Development, Finance & Administration Division
City of Toronto

14th floor, East Tower
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St W
Toronto Ontario M5H 2N2
416-397-0441
416-392-4976 (fax)
schakra2@toronto.ca
www.toronto.ca/newcomer

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