



# IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION SUPPORT NEEDED IN THE CITY OF KAWARTHA LAKES

**Date: August 25, 2025**

To: The Mayor and City Council

## Executive Summary

Kawartha Lakes is experiencing escalating needs of newcomers and immigrants. With a significant increase in demand from residents, partner agencies, and vital community institutions, there is an urgent and critical gap in essential services.

(KLHIISA) the **Kawartha Lakes & Haliburton Integrated Immigrant Services Association** is grassroots non-profit, immigrant led organization that has been established to respond to this humanitarian crisis unfolding in the Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton region.

We seek to educate municipal stakeholders about Immigrant needs and respectfully ask for formal and sustained municipal support to increase our capacity and continue, sustain, and effectively scale this vital work. This appeal introduces KLHIISA 's foundational mission and impact, outlines the pressing need for our services, and details the strategic actions we propose to undertake with your crucial support to ensure the successful integration and well-being of our newest community members.

KLHIISA is appealing for multiyear municipal funding and partnership support. While any support is greatly appreciated, we have outlined our needs for roughly \$50k per year for in the next three years.

Year	Funding Ask	Rationale
2026	\$50K	Seed funding for startup service And Community Navigator / outreach worker
2027	\$40 - 50K	Ongoing and expanded Community Navigator / outreach worker services
2028	\$40- 50K	Ongoing Community Navigator / outreach worker services

\*This conservative Ask supports evidence-based work that allows the City to see the work done with measurable results.



Working together, KLHIISA can help support the City of Kawartha Lakes' Municipal social and economic development strategy which explicitly calls for welcoming newcomers, as a priority for prosperity.

## **About KLHIISA**

**Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton Integrated Immigrants Association (KLHIISA)** is a non-profit, immigrant led organization established in August 2024 to serve the regions of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton. Our core mission is to foster belonging, collaboration, and success for immigrants and newcomers in Canada. We build diverse and inclusive communities by connecting newcomers with host communities and nurturing a welcoming environment. Our services include a Resource Hub, Settlement and Community Integration support, Employment Resources, Career Services and Skills Development, and Literacy Support and Language Skills Enhancement for Adult Learners.

KLHIISA provides welcoming, accessible services to all immigrants in Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton, ensuring that newcomers at every stage of their journey can find support to settle, work, and thrive. At the same time, KLHIISA plays a unique role that more formal, eligibility-based agencies cannot; reaching the most vulnerable, taking initiatives to counter social exclusion and isolation of the vulnerable. This includes individuals who are under-represented in official data, persons experiencing challenges due to factors such as their current immigration status, language barriers, living in fear of consequences of not being eligible to obtain government funded social assistance and other supports. With trust and a sense of safe space acknowledged to service users and community members, with knowledge and skills of cultural competency at its core, KLHIISA offers immigrants and newcomers a warm handoff, service navigation, community liaison and advocacy, services for career development that includes orientation on the Canadian workplace and employment readiness coaching with goal for job success, long term job retention. KLHIISA provides information on career pathways and in demand job occupations to fill labour needs, skills upgrading information, referrals to funded agencies and the foreign credentials evaluation bodies such as (World Education Services) WES. We utilize inclusive approach, meeting people where they are at and respecting individual's needs and personal choice, also striving to ensure that no one is left behind. Municipal investment would help KLHIISA address the hidden needs of our vulnerable community members, local residents that are immigrants and newcomers who might otherwise fall through the cracks.



## Current Challenges and Funding Requirements

The City of Kawartha Lakes, like many growing communities, is experiencing an increase in new immigrants and Canadian residents moving into the region in higher numbers than ever. While this influx brings valuable diversity and economic potential. However, it also presents unique challenges with lack of preparation in terms of resources to address the needs of these demographic and community members. We have observed a significant increase in referrals from community partners, such as local libraries, and self-referrals from individuals who have learned about our services through their case workers in other agencies. These individuals often face complex issues, including but not limited to navigating unfamiliar systems, language barriers, a lack of employment opportunities matching their skills, and social isolation. The current resources available are insufficient to meet the growing demand for specialized support tailored to their specific needs. Funding is critically needed to expand our capacity to provide essential services that bridge these gaps and ensure successful integration.

## Desired Outcomes and Service Support Framework

### Proposed Service Support Structure

With the requested funding, KLHISA aims to establish a robust and comprehensive service support structure designed to directly address the identified needs of new immigrants and vulnerable Canadians in the City of Kawartha Lakes. This structure will include:

- **Enhanced Case Management:** Dedicated case worker (hire Part-time Outreach Worker/ Community Navigator) to provide individualized support, guidance, and advocacy, helping clients navigate complex social, legal, and economic systems.
- **Expanded Resource Hub:** Complete started project on the Resource Hub and equip space with capacity to offer a more extensive wider resources, information on housing, healthcare, education, and community services, available in multiple languages.
- **Targeted Employment Programs:** Enhancement of the specialized programs focusing on resume building, interview skills, job search strategies, and professional networking, tailored to meet the unique needs of immigrants and newcomers in the Canadian labour market and to serve local employment need. This will include bridging programs for internationally trained professionals in selected areas.
- **Increased Language and Literacy Support:** Expansion of our language and literacy programs, including ESL classes and conversational English groups, to improve communication skills essential for daily life and employment.



- **Community Integration Initiatives:** Development of mentorship programs, cultural exchange events, and community workshops to foster social connections, reduce isolation, and promote a sense of belonging within the broader community.
- **Partnership Strengthening:** Formalization and expansion of partnerships with local libraries, community centers, and other social service agencies to ensure seamless referral pathways and collaborative support.

## Expected Community Benefits

The implementation of this enhanced service support framework will yield significant benefits for both the new immigrant and Canadian populations, as well as the City of Kawartha Lakes as a whole:

- **Improved Integration and Self-Sufficiency:** By providing comprehensive support, we will empower individuals to become self-sufficient, actively participate in the community, and contribute to the local economy.
- **Reduced Strain on Mainstream Services:** Our specialized services will alleviate pressure on mainstream social assistance programs and emergency services by addressing the unique needs of vulnerable populations proactively. \*The Outreach worker/ Community Navigator we intend to hire with the funding appeal will serve a community role as liaison, a go-between for all community agencies that come across complex situations involving social welfare issues and need of immigrants and newcomers requiring intervention and the scope we could help with for the resolution, addressing the issue.
- **Enhanced Community Cohesion:** Increased opportunities for social interaction and cultural exchange will foster a more inclusive and welcoming environment, strengthening community bonds and reducing social fragmentation.
- **Economic Growth:** Successful integration of newcomers into the workforce will fill labour gaps, boost local businesses, and contribute to the overall economic prosperity of the city.
- **Increased Civic Engagement:** Empowered and integrated individuals are more likely to participate in civic life, contributing to a more vibrant and engaged citizenry.

## Sustainability and Growth Plan

KLHIISA is committed to long-term sustainability and growth. The proposed funding will serve as a critical catalyst, enabling us to establish a robust operational foundation. Our sustainability plan includes diversifying funding sources through grant applications, corporate sponsorships,



and individual donations. We will also focus on building a strong volunteer base and developing internal capacity through training and professional development for our staff. Our growth strategy involves continuous program evaluation and adaptation based on community needs, ensuring that our services remain relevant and impactful. We envision a future where KLHIISA is a cornerstone of immigrant and newcomer support in the Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton regions, contributing significantly to the social and economic fabric of the community.

**In Closing**

KLHIISA was born out of compassion, necessity and taking action on community leadership. We have shown what is possible through volunteerism, but we now need your collaboration and funding to continue to expand, build on our capacity, provide meaningful intervention and make a stronger impact through our work for the people we serve and for the wider community at large. The people we support are already part of the community and can be considered as part of the diversities represented in the region. With your support, we can help them thrive, do better, be a benefit and add value to the system.

Thank you for your time today. We very much appreciate your commitment to have inclusive and welcoming Kawartha Lakes and we would be honored to be part of that.  
Thank you!

**Geraldine Silva**  
Director at KLHIISA

Office: Unit B, 146 Kent Street West, Lindsay. K9V 2Y4  
Email: [geraldine@klhiisa.org](mailto:geraldine@klhiisa.org)  
Phone: 705 212 2345

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**About our partners**

We are working closely with the **Community Foundation of Kawartha Lakes, NCC Peterborough and Trent University's Professor Firang** to review and help interpret immigrant and newcomer data within the Vital Signs project initiative as well as facilitate the recruitment, setup and analysis of Vital Conversations with Kawartha Lakes immigrant population. This groundbreaking work will be hosted by CKL library on Lindsay and is taking place in October, this Fall 2025.



## APPENDIX

### About Hidden Immigrants in the City of Kawartha Lakes

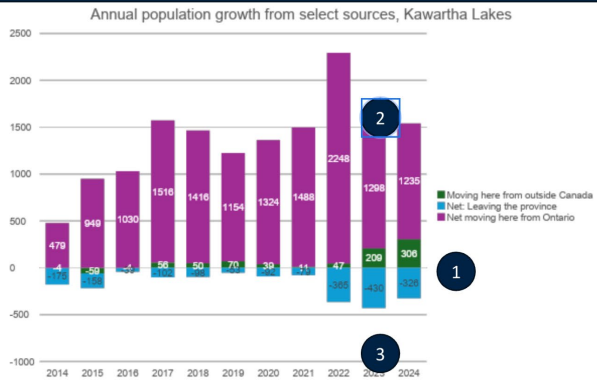
KLHIISA fills a critical local gap by serving “hidden” newcomers—people who are under-counted in official data and often ineligible or unwilling to access mainstream, federally or provincially funded services. This includes non-status and precariously- immigration document statused migrants, victims of crime, and residents who have been declined or denied supports. As a trusted, low-barrier community organization rooted in Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton, KLHIISA provides warm handoffs, application and system navigation, safety-planning, job retention and employment-readiness supports.

The gaps in our services.

- **Eligibility gaps leave people unserved.** Settlement services are generally limited to permanent residents, protected persons, and a few temporary resident groups; eligibility varies by funder, meaning many residents aren’t covered by federal programming. Municipal bridging funds can help close that gap.
- **Ontario’s program is broader—but still not universal.** The province’s Newcomer Settlement Program serves PRs, refugee claimants, some temporary residents and naturalized citizens, yet non-status residents remain outside formal eligibility. Community navigators are often the only safe door for them.
- **Fear and safety concerns suppress help-seeking.** Research shows non-status and precariously-statused immigrants often avoid police, courts, and even health or social services for fear of exposure or deportation—especially survivors of crime. Trusted intermediaries increase access and reporting. [digitalcommons.osgoode.yorku.ca/carefuge/journals.yorku.cacmsny.org](https://digitalcommons.osgoode.yorku.ca/carefuge/journals.yorku.cacmsny.org)
- **Hidden need exists even where immigrant share is “small.”** In 2021, only ~7.9% of Kawartha Lakes residents were foreign-born, with very low counts of non-permanent residents in the census—precisely the groups most likely to be undercounted. Vital Signs research gathering is uncovering a growing population; in 2023 & 2024, international immigration settling in the City of Kawartha Lakes has grown significantly. We’ve welcomed over 500 recent immigrants in two years. Using work force development provided data, we estimate our current immigrant population to be over 6,000 people. Understanding that these numbers likely under represent the true immigrant needs, local, culturally-safe outreach is required to surface and support this audience.



**Growth is changing slightly in recent years with people leaving the province and growth from direct immigration**



- 1 International immigration is starting to be a substantial source of growth from the first time in recent history in 2023 and 2024
- 2 People continue to move here from rest of Ontario, though its slowed slightly
- 3 People are increasingly leaving the province in recent years

- **Municipal strategy explicitly calls for welcoming newcomers.** Kawartha Lakes’ 2025–2029 Economic Development Strategy highlights “making newcomers welcome” as a priority for prosperity, aligning a KLHIISA partnership with adopted policy.
- **Population growth is accelerating—planning now matters.** The City projects strong growth to 2051; proactive newcomer integration reduces downstream costs and supports labour force participation.
- **KLHIISA is locally anchored and operating now.** KLHIISA was established in 2024 to serve Kawartha Lakes & Haliburton, with an explicit mission of equity, inclusion, and collaboration—ideal for low-barrier navigation and warm handoffs.