

UNAMA'KI - CAPE BRETON

Immigrant Survey 2023



IT IS
WHAT
IT IS



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About the Survey

Every second year, the Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP) conducts a survey of people living in Unama'ki - Cape Breton who were born outside of Canada. The survey covers a range of topics related to the experiences of immigrants as they settle in to life on the island. In 2023, the Unama'ki - Cape Breton Immigrant Survey was conducted in June and July, with 202 individuals participating. The survey was in English and was conducted online, with participants being advised that support would be made available to complete the survey in other languages or in a different format.

When compared to the population of Unama'ki - Cape Breton, the sample size of the survey is reasonably robust. However, care should be taken when interpreting the data – particularly with any smaller numbers. Findings for groups of less than 5 individuals have been suppressed for privacy reasons. The data presented here represents what we heard from all survey participants and is not disaggregated in any way.

Additional information on the Immigrant Survey, past survey reports, a visual summary of survey highlights, and future reports can be found at:

www.welcometocapebreton.ca/immigrant-survey

Basic Information

■ Immigration category

Q1. Which of the following best describes you? (n=202)¹

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
I immigrated to Canada as an economic-category immigrant (e.g. Federal Skilled Worker Program, Provincial Nominee Program, Canadian Experience Class, and dependents of economic applicants)	40	20%
I immigrated to Canada as a family-category immigrant (sponsored spouse, sponsored parent or grandparent, or other immigrant sponsored by family)	23	11%
I am currently in Canada as an international student	100	50%
I am currently in Canada on a temporary work visa	25	12%
Other	14	7%

Half of survey respondents were current international students. The other half had come mostly as economic- or family-category immigrants or were currently on temporary work visas.

¹“n” for each question is the total number of individuals who responded to the question.

■ Length of time living in Canada

Q2. How long have you been living in Canada? (n=201)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Less than 1 year	71	35%
1 to 5 years	89	44%
6 to 10 years	17	8%
10+ years	24	12%

80% of participants have been in Canada for 5 years or less. ²

² Numbers may differ from the sum of percentages due to rounding.

■ Years in the community

Q18. How many years have you been in this community? (n=170)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Less than 1 year	55	32%
1 to 2 years	46	27%
3 to 5 years	41	24%
6 to 10 years	12	7%
10+ years	16	9%



80% of respondents live in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality and 18% in the other four municipalities on the island.

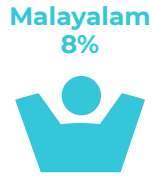
9% of respondents have lived in this community for 10+ years.

■ Municipality of residence

Q3. Where do you live? (n=202)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Cape Breton Regional Municipality	162	80%
Inverness County	14	7%
Town of Port Hawkesbury	16	8%
Richmond County	**	**%
Victoria County	6	3%
Other	**	**%

**Note some data was suppressed due to small numbers to protect privacy.



■ First language

Q4. **What is your first language?** (Your first language is the first language you learned at home.) (n=201)

Participants had 29 different first languages. The top languages included:

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
English	42	21%
Tagalog (Pilipino, Filipino)	31	15%
Punjabi (Panjabi)	20	10%
Malayalam	17	8%
Spanish	17	8%
Hindi	13	6%
Mandarin	13	6%
Portuguese	7	3%
Gujarati	6	3%
Arabic	5	2%

91% of respondents spoke more than one language. 52% spoke more than two languages.

93% of respondents spoke and understood English well or very well.

■ Number of languages spoken

Q5. **How many languages can you speak well?** (n=202)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
1	19	9%
2	77	38%
3	74	37%
4	17	8%
5 or more	15	7%

■ English ability

Q6. **How well can you speak and understand English?** (n=160)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Very well	109	68%
Well	39	24%
Fairly well	9	6%
Poorly	**	**%
Not at all	**	**%

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Education, Employment, and Income

■ Education

Q31. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (n=156)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
High school or equivalent	5	3%
Trade/technical school	**	**%
College diploma	21	13%
Bachelor's degree	69	44%
Master's degree	53	34%
PhD	**	**%

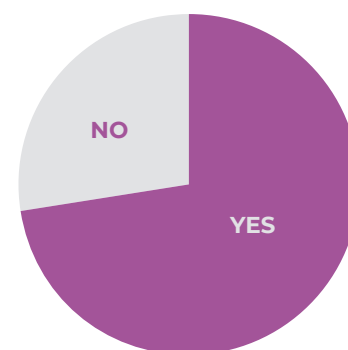
81% of respondents had a Bachelor's degree or above.

■ Employment

Q36. What is your employment status? (n=156, but without “prefer not to answer” n=154)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
I am working full time	83	54%
I am working part time or casual	37	24%
I am unemployed but looking for work	20	13%
I am self-employed	7	5%
I am not in the paid workforce (retired, caring for children, not seeking work, etc.)	5	3%
Other	**	**%

Q37. Have you obtained post-secondary credentials outside of Canada? (n=155)



Yes - 112 (72%)
No - 43 (28%)

**Note some data was suppressed due to small numbers to protect privacy.

Q38. If you have obtained post-secondary credentials outside of Canada, have you experienced any of the following barriers in having your foreign credentials recognized in Canada? (Check all that apply) (n=97)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
I am required to have Canadian work experience	43	44%
My credentials are not recognized in Canada	34	35%
Employers do not accept my qualifications and experience	25	26%
I do not know the process for having my credentials recognized	20	21%
There are financial constraints or entry barriers to joining a professional association	20	21%
Other (please explain)	17	18%
I am not proficient in English or French	**	**%

**Note some data was suppressed due to small numbers to protect privacy.

19% responded that their housing was neither suitable nor affordable.

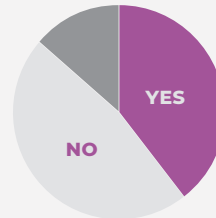
Housing

Q39. Does your housing suit your needs? (Are there enough bedrooms and is it in good repair?) (n=154)



Yes - 114 (74%)
No - 40 (26%)

Q40. Is your housing affordable? (Housing may be considered "affordable" if it costs less than 30% of a household's before-tax income.) (n=154)



Yes - 58 (38%)
No - 69 (45%)
Unsure - 20 (13%)

Income sufficiency

Q41. Is your household income enough for the needs of you and your family? (n=153)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Our income is enough for our needs	38	28%
Our income is not quite enough for our needs	62	46%
Our income is definitely not enough for our needs	36	26%
Unsure	10	7%
Prefer not to answer	7	5%

72% responded that their income is not enough for their needs.

Job commensurate with experience

Q42. Are you in a job that is at the same level as your skills and experience? (n=153)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Yes	49	33%
No	78	53%
I'm not currently employed	20	14%
Prefer not to answer	6	4%

Among those that responded and were employed, 33% indicated that they were in a job that was at the same level as their skills and experience and 67% were not.

Use of Community Services

■ Service ratings

Q7. Please rate your experience with the following community services in the last 12 months in Unama'ki – Cape Breton. (“n” varies by the individual services listed)

Category	Positive Rating (Excellent, Very Good, or Good)	Negative Rating (Acceptable or Poor)
English language learning	81%	19%
Police	81%	19%
Education	79%	21%
Language interpretation/translation	71%	29%
Settlement/immigrant services	70%	30%
Local municipal government/bylaw	69%	31%
Small business/entrepreneurial supports	66%	34%
Legal/courts	63%	37%
Recreation services	59%	41%
Mental health	57%	43%
Childcare	57%	43%
Employment and/or skills training	51%	49%
Transportation services	40%	60%
Health	36%	64%
Housing	30%	70%
French language learning	21%	79%

60% of respondents rated transportation services as acceptable or poor.

**66% of respondents
rated small business/
entrepreneurial supports as
good, very good or excellent.**

Specific ratings included:

Category	Excellent (%)	Very Good (%)	Good (%)	Acceptable (%)	Poor (%)	# of Participants that Accessed Each Service
Childcare	8%	17%	32%	20%	23%	90
Education	20%	33%	26%	18%	3%	156
Employment and/or skills training	9%	19%	23%	17%	32%	162
English language learning	19%	31%	31%	12%	8%	118
French language learning	2%	10%	8%	29%	50%	48
Health	7%	12%	17%	21%	43%	166
Housing	3%	9%	17%	25%	43%	176
Language interpretation/translation	14%	22%	35%	13%	16%	104
Legal/courts	8%	22%	33%	30%	7%	73
Local municipal government/bylaw	13%	22%	34%	24%	7%	120
Mental health	9%	19%	29%	22%	21%	116
Police	22%	30%	29%	14%	5%	125
Recreation services	8%	21%	30%	25%	16%	164
Settlement/immigrant services	19%	23%	28%	18%	12%	145
Small business/entrepreneurial supports	10%	31%	25%	19%	15%	110
Transportation services	4%	9%	27%	31%	29%	163

■ Interpretation

Q8. If you or a family member went to a hospital, health clinic, or talked to a health professional in the past year, did the clinic provide in-person or phone/video interpretation? (n=187)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
I did not need language interpretation	112	60%
I did not go to a hospital, clinic, or health professional	62	33%
Language interpretation was provided for me	**	**%
I wanted language interpretation but did not receive it	**	**%
I brought a family member or friend because interpretation was not available	**	**%
I brought a family member or friend because I prefer this instead of a professional interpreter	**	**%
Other (please specify)	**	**%

**Note some data was suppressed due to small numbers to protect privacy.



Information preferences

Q43. Do you prefer to get information about community and settlement services from the following sources? (“n” varies by the individual options listed)

Category	Yes (%)	Maybe (%)	No (%)	# of Participants that Responded
Community organization websites	77%	11%	11%	131
Facebook	73%	14%	14%	140
Emails	73%	12%	14%	138
www.welcometocapebreton.ca	71%	16%	13%	128
Information sessions	71%	18%	10%	125
Settlement worker or other community organization staff	65%	20%	15%	127
Word of mouth	64%	21%	14%	126
Instagram	61%	14%	25%	131
LinkedIn	59%	13%	28%	125
Local media (newspaper, radio)	56%	17%	27%	125
Messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp, Telegram, WeChat, etc.)	50%	13%	38%	119
Twitter	34%	16%	50%	120

Community organization websites, Facebook, and email were the preferred sources for information about community and settlement services.



Belonging

Overall wellbeing

Q9. How do you feel about your life as a whole right now? (Using a scale of 10 to 0, where 10 means “very satisfied” and 0 means “very dissatisfied”) (n=163)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Very satisfied (rated 8.0 to 10.0)	13	8%
Somewhat satisfied (rated 4.0 to 7.9)	58	36%
Dissatisfied (rated 0.0 to 3.9)	92	56%

Welcoming

Q10. How welcoming is your community toward immigrants? (Using a scale of 10 to 0, where 10 means “very welcoming” and 0 means “not at all welcoming”) (n=151)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Very welcoming (rated 8.0 to 10.0)	14	9%
Somewhat welcoming (rated 4.0 to 7.9)	35	23%
Not very welcoming (rated 0.0 to 3.9)	102	68%

■ Sense of belonging

Q11. How do you describe your sense of belonging in Unama'ki – Cape Breton?

(Sense of belonging is when you feel accepted and valued by others around you. It is when you feel like Unama'ki – Cape Breton is truly your home.) (n=174)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Very strong	46	26%
Somewhat strong	86	49%
Somewhat weak	28	16%
Very weak	14	8%

75% responded that their sense of belonging was either somewhat strong or very strong.

■ Isolation

Q12. How much have you felt isolated or alone over the last 12 months in Unama'ki – Cape Breton? (n=186)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
A great deal	20	11%
Quite a bit	42	23%
Somewhat	42	23%
A little bit	49	26%
Not at all	33	18%

■ Safety

Q13. How safe do you feel in Unama'ki – Cape Breton? (n=186)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Extremely	52	28%
Very	82	44%
Moderately	42	23%
Slightly	8	4%
Not at all	**	**%

72% responded that they feel either very safe or extremely safe in Unama'ki – Cape Breton.

**Note some data was suppressed due to small numbers to protect privacy.

■ Discrimination

Q14. In the last 12 months, have you experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly by others in Unama'ki – Cape Breton? (Discrimination is when others treat you unfairly because of your race, skin colour, religion, ethnicity, or other reasons.) (n=186)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Yes	61	33%
No	125	67%

33% responded that they had experienced discrimination or had been treated unfairly in the last 12 months.

■ Reasons for discrimination

Q15. If you have experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly by others, what were the reasons? (Choose all that apply) (n=58)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Race or skin colour	35	60%
Immigration status	25	43%
Ethnicity or culture	23	40%
Accent	14	24%
Income	10	17%
Physical appearance (other than skin colour)	8	14%
Language ability	8	14%
Religion	6	10%
Age	6	10%
Gender	**	**%
Sexual orientation	**	**%
Disability (either a disability that people can see or one that is invisible)	**	**%
Other (please specify)	8	14%

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■ Where discrimination happened

Q16. If you have experienced discrimination, in what types of situations did you experience that? (n=58)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
When applying for a job or promotion	24	41%
At my job – for example from supervisors, co-workers or clients	21	36%
While using public areas, such as parks or sidewalks	18	31%
While using buses or taxis	14	24%
When looking for housing	13	22%
In a store, bank or restaurant	12	21%
At community/public events	9	16%
When interacting with my neighbours	9	16%
When accessing other community services	6	10%
At school or university	5	9%
When seeing a doctor or in other health care settings	**	**%
When interacting with the police	**	**%
When using libraries, community/recreational centres, arenas	**	**%
When crossing the border into Canada	**	**%
When interacting with the courts	**	**%
Other (please specify)	**	**%

**Note some data was suppressed due to small numbers to protect privacy.

41% responded that they had experienced discrimination when applying for a job or promotion.

17% of respondents felt at home when they arrived.

■ Feeling at home

Q19. How long did it take you to feel at home in this community? (n=172)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
When I arrived	30	17%
Less than a year	57	33%
1-2 years	29	17%
3-5 years	16	9%
6-10 years	**	**%
More than 10 years	**	**%
I still don't feel at home in this community	35	20%

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Settling in Unama'ki - Cape Breton

■ Why Unama'ki – Cape Breton

Q22. Why did you come to Unama'ki – Cape Breton?

(Choose your top 3 reasons) (n=169)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Post-secondary institutions	93	55%
For a job	35	21%
I had friends or family living here	31	18%
It was more affordable than other communities	27	16%
Other (please specify)	19	11%
I didn't choose Unama'ki - Cape Breton - the community was chosen for me	11	7%
A healthy local economy	9	5%
Cultural, faith, or language groups in this community	7	4%
Community services and supports in this community	7	4%

■ Settlement experience

Q17. How would you describe your experience of settling in Unama'ki – Cape Breton?

(Settling includes your whole experience of moving to, settling and feeling included in Unama'ki – Cape Breton.) (n=172)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Excellent	36	21%
Good	87	51%
Neutral	39	23%
Not very good	10	6%

72% had a positive settlement experience. 29% did not have a positive settlement experience.

■ Challenges

Q20. What are the biggest challenges you or your family have experienced in the last year in Unama'ki – Cape Breton?

(Choose all that apply) (n=160)

61% responded that finding work was their biggest challenge in the last year.

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Finding work	103	61%
Finding health care	101	59%
Finding affordable housing	92	54%
Cost of living or money problems	82	48%
Transportation	69	41%
Making friends	49	29%
Learning where and how to do things	28	16%
Finding relevant programming in local community centres, arts and culture spaces, libraries, etc.	27	16%
Receiving public or social services (e.g. settlement services, government services, etc.)	23	14%
Finding mental health care	20	12%
Finding childcare	19	11%
Starting a new business	19	11%
Discrimination/racism	16	9%
Learning English	7	4%
Making sure your children are safe and happy at school and in the community	7	4%
Getting information in a language you understand	5	3%
Other (please specify)	**	**%

**Note some data was suppressed due to small numbers to protect privacy.

■ Likelihood of staying

Q23. How likely are you to stay permanently in Unama'ki – Cape Breton? (n=167)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
I definitely plan on staying permanently	56	34%
I might stay permanently	58	35%
I'm not sure	45	27%
I don't plan on staying	8	5%

32% were not sure or do not plan on staying permanently in Unama'ki – Cape Breton. Of these, most cited reasons for leaving related to job opportunities, housing, and health care. When asked where they would move to if they left, the most common responses were: unsure/I don't know, Halifax, Alberta, or back to their home country.



Community Contributions

Q26. What are some of the ways you help create a thriving and prosperous community for everyone? (Choose all that apply) (n=160)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
I help my neighbours when they need it	114	71%
I speak up for fairness and treat people with kindness in my community	72	45%
I contribute with my skills and experience to the local economy through my job	72	45%
I continue to build my skills and strengthen the ways I can contribute to this community (learning English, further education, building professional skills, etc.)	72	45%
I contribute to improving the natural environment (recycling, picking up garbage, planting trees, etc.)	67	42%
I help newcomers to Canada make their home in our community	63	39%
I volunteer with community organizations, groups, or faith communities	55	34%
I donate to local charities	49	31%
I volunteer in cultural, faith or ethnic association activities	44	28%
I provide unpaid help for family members (children, grandparents, etc.)	34	21%
I volunteer with youth sports (coaching, driving youth, etc.)	23	14%
I am on a board of directors or another committee	20	13%
I tutor or help youth learn in this community	14	9%
I am a business owner and my business contributes to our community's economy	13	8%
I vote in local/municipal, provincial or national elections in Canada	12	8%
Other (please specify)	**	**%

**Note some data was suppressed due to small numbers to protect privacy.

Calls to Action for Community Leaders

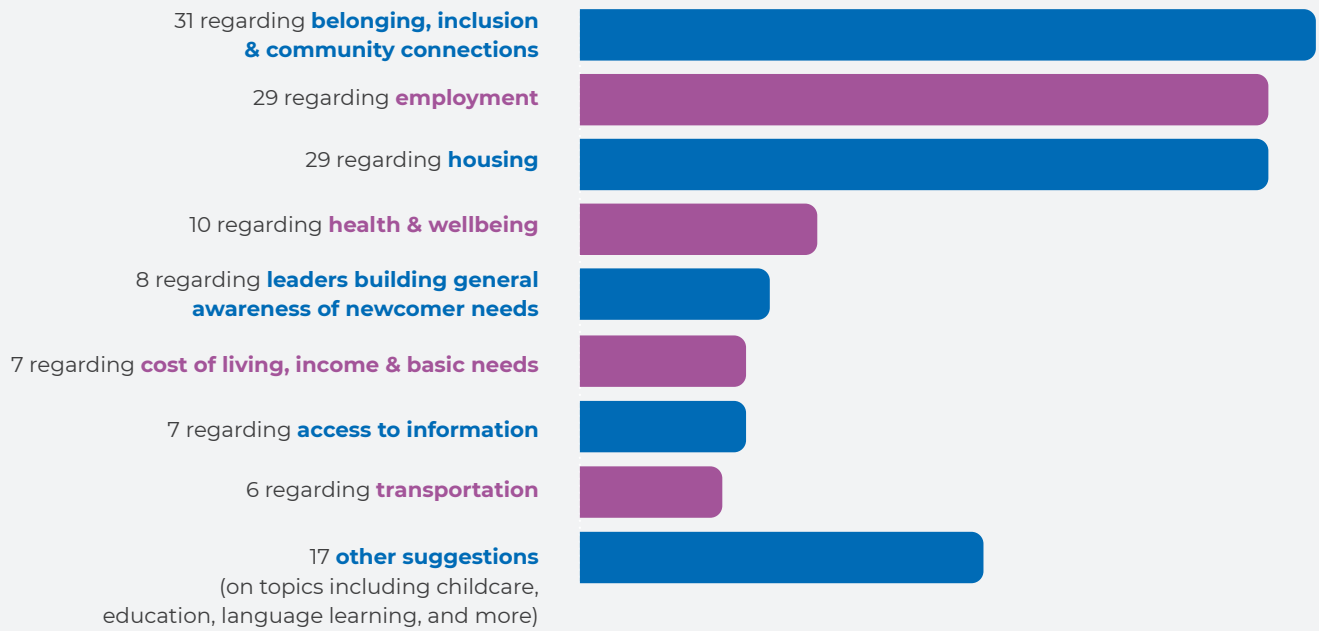
Q21. What changes would help immigrants to reach their full potential in Unama'ki – Cape Breton? (Choose your top 3)
 'Immigrants' include people born outside of Canada who are now living, working, or studying in this community (permanent residents, Canadian citizens, refugees, temporary residents, refugee claimants, and international students) (n=169)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
More affordable housing	128	76%
Better programs for immigrants to find work	113	67%
A central place for both employers to find immigrant workers and for workers to find employment	88	52%
More education for employers on the value and ways of hiring, retaining and promoting immigrants	78	46%
Actions to improve the social connections of immigrants	60	36%
One place to get all settlement, immigration, and other services	56	33%
Actions to reduce racism and discrimination towards immigrants	42	25%
Actions to increase welcoming and acceptance of immigrants	41	24%
Greater voice or involvement of immigrants in community leadership and planning	41	24%
More effort by community services to better serve immigrants	39	23%
Service agencies working together more	39	23%
More immigrant programming in local community centres, arts & culture spaces, libraries, etc.	37	22%
More opportunities to help improve English skills	32	19%
More English learning opportunities in workplaces	24	14%
More funding for... (please specify using "Other" below)*	22	13%
Better availability of interpretation and translation	14	8%
More computer access training	14	8%
Other (please specify)	10	6%

*The most common responses regarding need for more funding were for health care and transportation.

Q28. What is the most important thing community leaders should do to improve the welcoming, integration and wellbeing of immigrants in Unama'ki – Cape Breton? (n=98)

Respondents shared many specific suggestions for change and improvement that can be categorized as follows:



Demographics

Age

Q29. What is your age (n=156)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
16-19 years	**	**%
20-24	12	8%
25-34	69	44%
35-44	52	33%
45-54	15	10%
55-64	**	**%
65 or older	**	**%

**Note some data was suppressed due to small numbers to protect privacy.



Race

Q30. Which would best describe you? (Choose all that apply) (n=156, but without “prefer not to answer” n=149)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)	50	34%
Filipino	27	18%
White	20	13%
Latin American	16	11%
Chinese	14	9%
Black	11	7%
Japanese	**	**%
Korean	**	**%
Arab	**	**%
Southeast Asian (e.g. Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai)	**	**%
West Asian (e.g. Iranian, Afghan)	**	**%
Other (please specify)	**	**%

85% were racialized. Racialized refers to groups, other than Indigenous peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. In Statistics Canada’s 2021 Census, it is referred to as “visible minority”.

*Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% as participants were able to select more than one option.

**Note some data was suppressed due to small numbers to protect privacy.

Gender

Q32. How would you describe your gender identity? (n=156, but without “prefer not to answer” n=152)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Man	54	36%
Non-binary	**	**%
Woman	97	64%
Prefer to self-describe (please specify)	**	**%

**Note some data was suppressed due to small numbers to protect privacy.

LGBTQ+

Q33. Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community? (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning) (n=155, but without “prefer not to answer” n=149)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Yes	12	8%
No	137	92%

8% identified as a member of the LGBTQ+ community.

Disability

Q34. Are you living with a disability (physical or mental) or a chronic illness that limits your activity? (n=155, but without “prefer not to answer” n=150)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Yes	7	5%
No	143	95%

5% indicated they were living with a disability or a chronic illness that limits their activity.

Faith

Q35. If you are a member of a faith community, please share which one (n=156, but without “prefer not to answer, n=143)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Christian	56	39%
I am not a member of a faith community	36	25%
Hindu	20	14%
Muslim	10	7%
Sikh	8	6%
Other (please specify)	7	5%
Buddhist	5	3%
Jewish	**	**%

**Note some data was suppressed due to small numbers to protect privacy.

Survey Awareness

Q44. How did you find out about this survey? (n=154)

Category	# of Participants	% of Participants
Social media	64	42%
A community organization	47	31%
A friend or personal connection	34	22%
A university or college institution	12	8%
At work	10	6%
Poster	3	2%
Other (please specify)	9	6%



Appreciation

For making the learnings from this survey possible and meaningful – **thank you.**

The CBLIP wishes to acknowledge:

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To learn more about the Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership:

capebretonpartnership.com/cblip

For more Information on the Unama'ki - Cape Breton Immigrant Survey:

welcometocapebreton.ca/immigrant-survey

