Responding to labour market needs in rural Canada through immigration to welcoming communities

By

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Overview of Presentation

- Immigration to Canada
- Immigrant distribution in Canada
- Policy matters: Immigration to Manitoba
- Welcoming communities
- A case study: Brandon Manitoba
- Implications for policy, practice, and research
- Challenges for moving forward

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Population Forecast

For Canada, it is anticipated that deaths will exceed births in about 2030 and from that point forward the only source of population growth will be from immigration.

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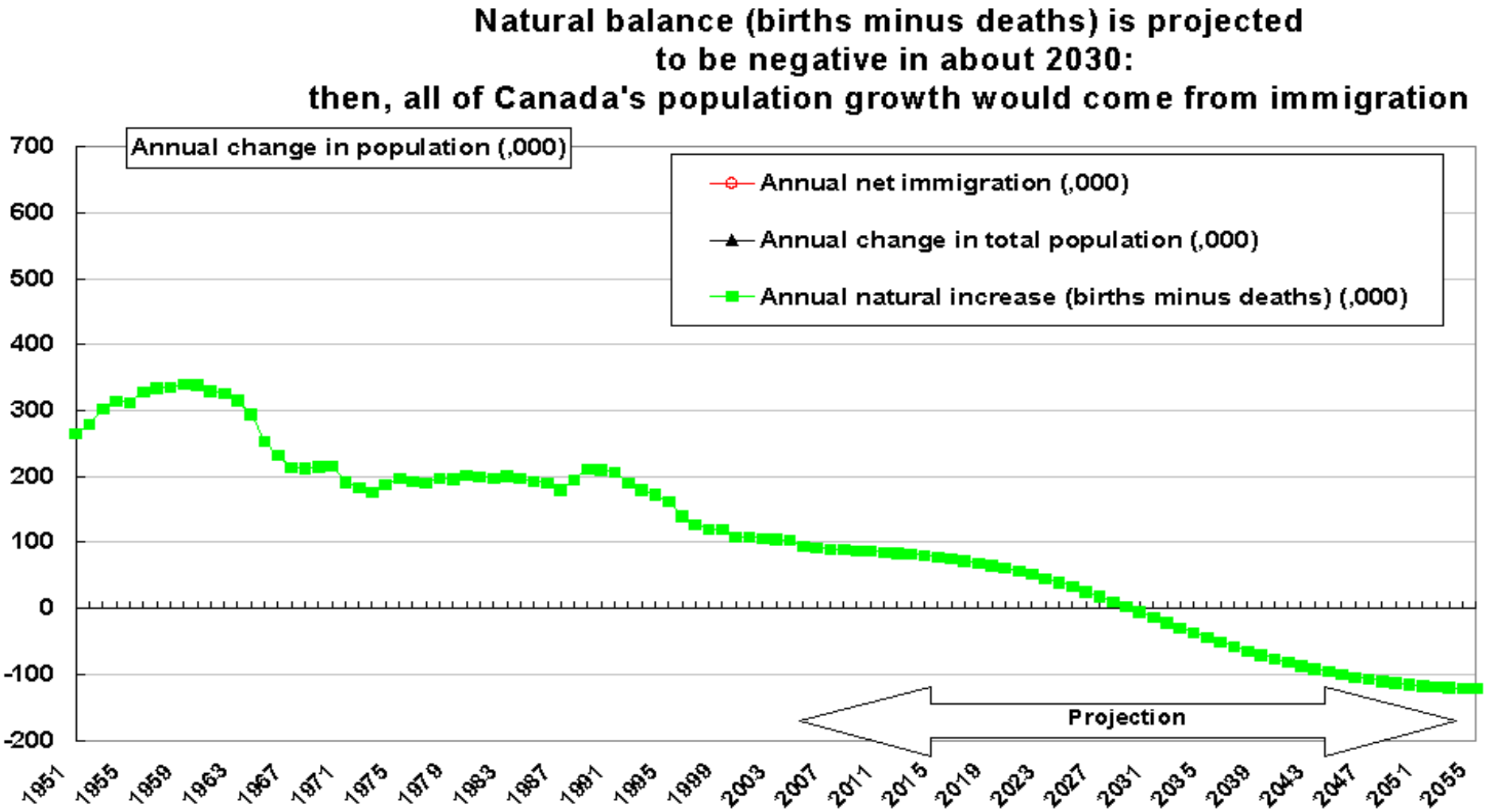
Rural Immigrants in Canada: An Overview



Source: Statistics Canada (2005) Population projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 91-529-XIE).
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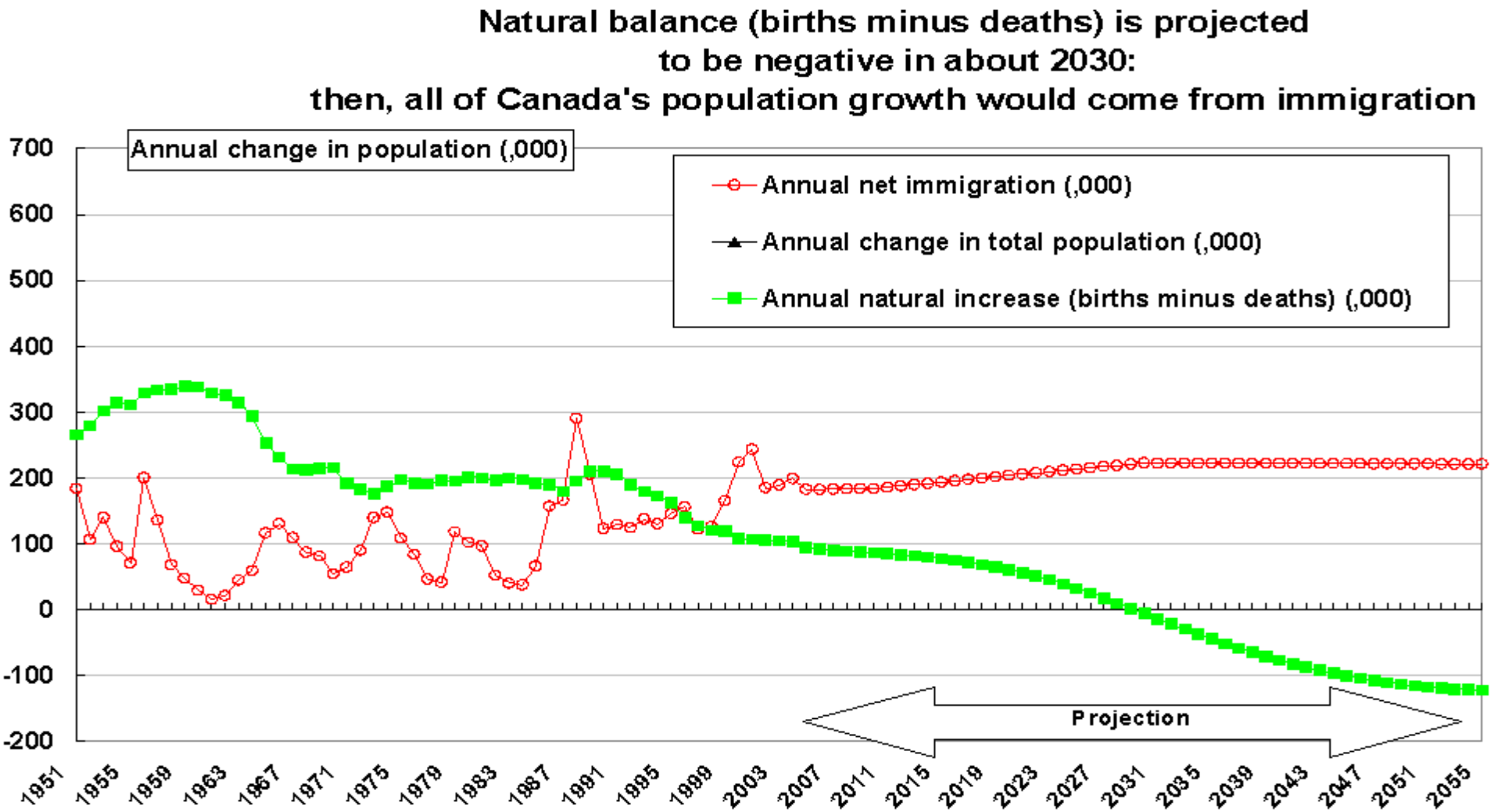

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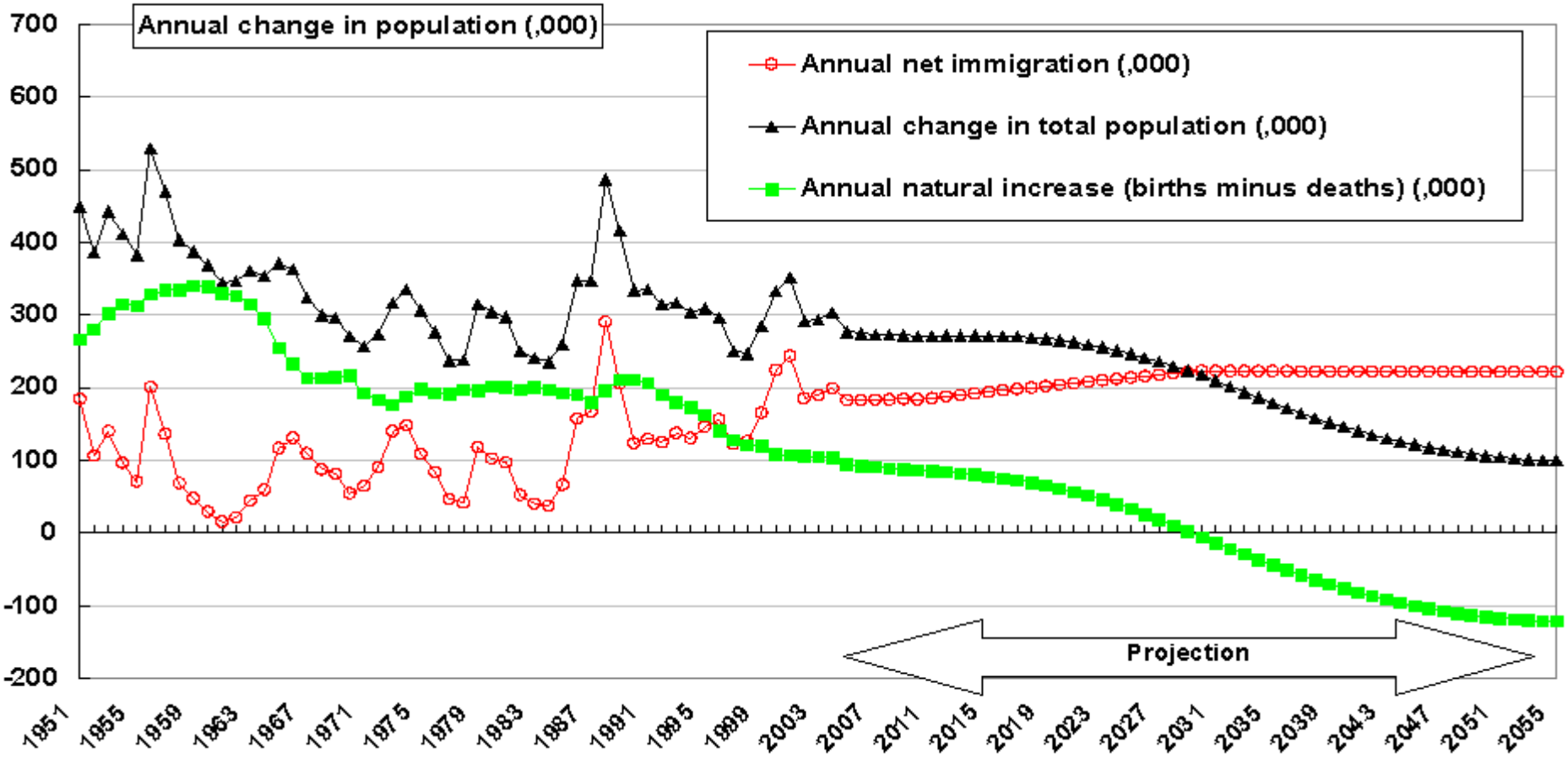
Rural Immigrants in Canada: An Overview

Natural balance (births minus deaths) is projected to be negative in about 2030: then, all of Canada's population growth would come from immigration



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Rural immigrants in Canada: An overview

§Within rural and small town Canada, 5.3% were immigrants in 2006

- And most arrived in Canada at least 20 years earlier

§Within larger urban centres, 23% were immigrants in 2006

- And most arrived within the previous 20 years

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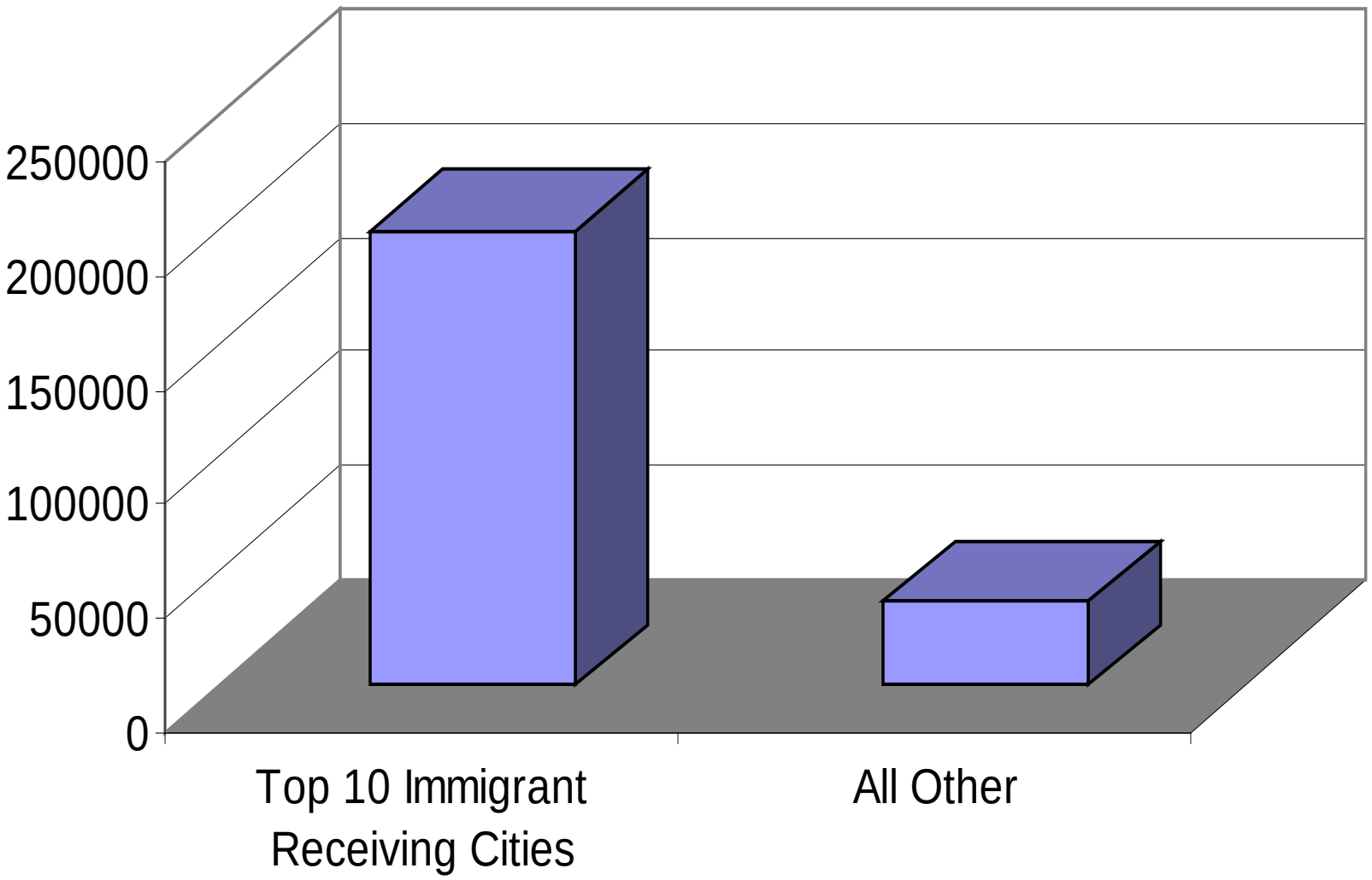
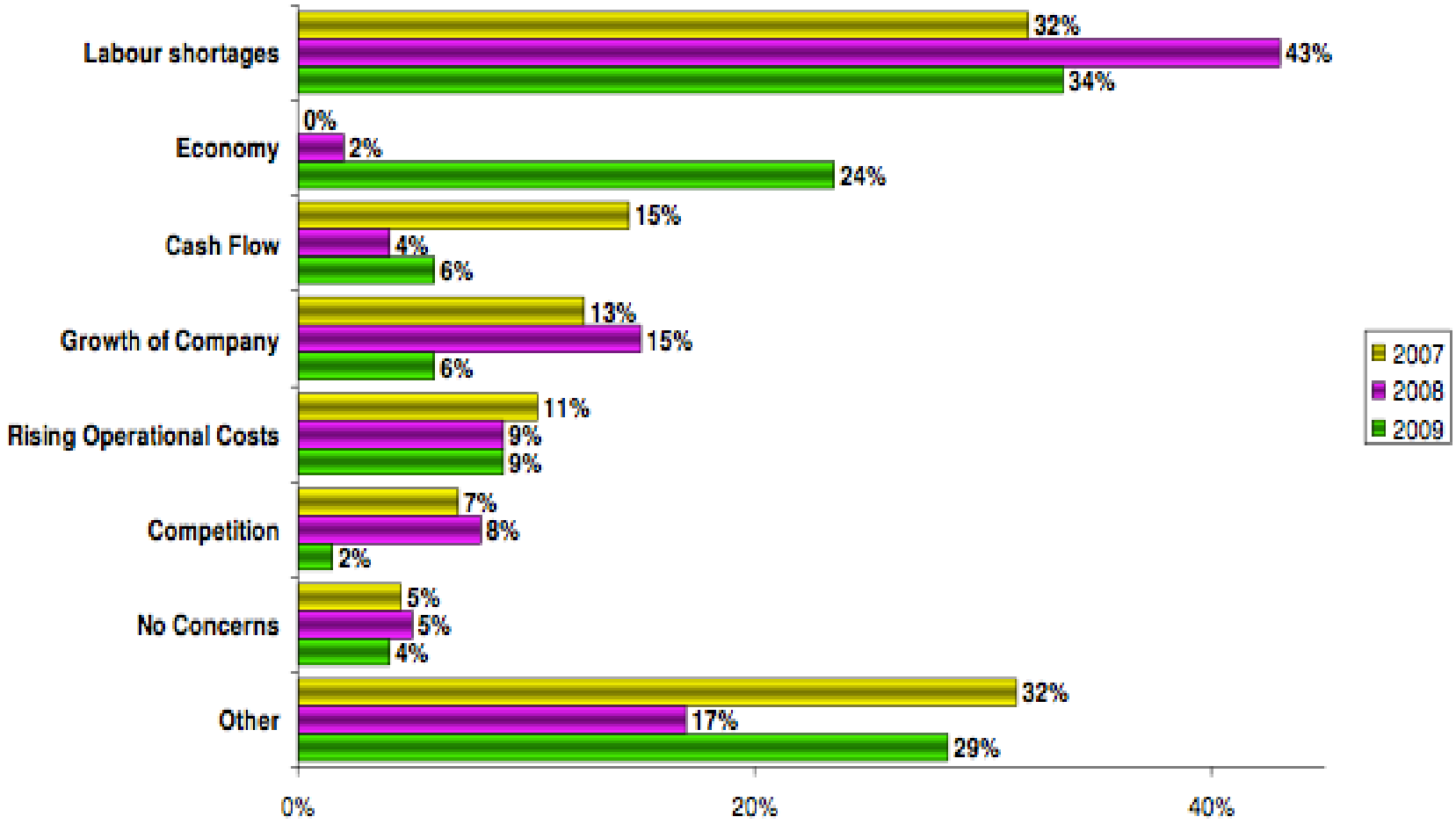
Concentration of Immigrants: Top 10 cities / Other



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007

Q.3. *What is the greatest challenge facing your company for the next 12 months?*



Manitoba Policy Matters

- 1996: Canada-MB Immigration Agreement
  - 1998: included Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and settlement services
- 2006: PNP accounted for 67% of MB's newcomers
  - 30% of Provincial Nominees chose rural destinations
- Policy framework – *Growing Through Immigration Strategy (2007)*
  - Current annual target is 10,000 arrivals
  - New target is 20,000 over the next decade
  - Strategic growth group – senior officials

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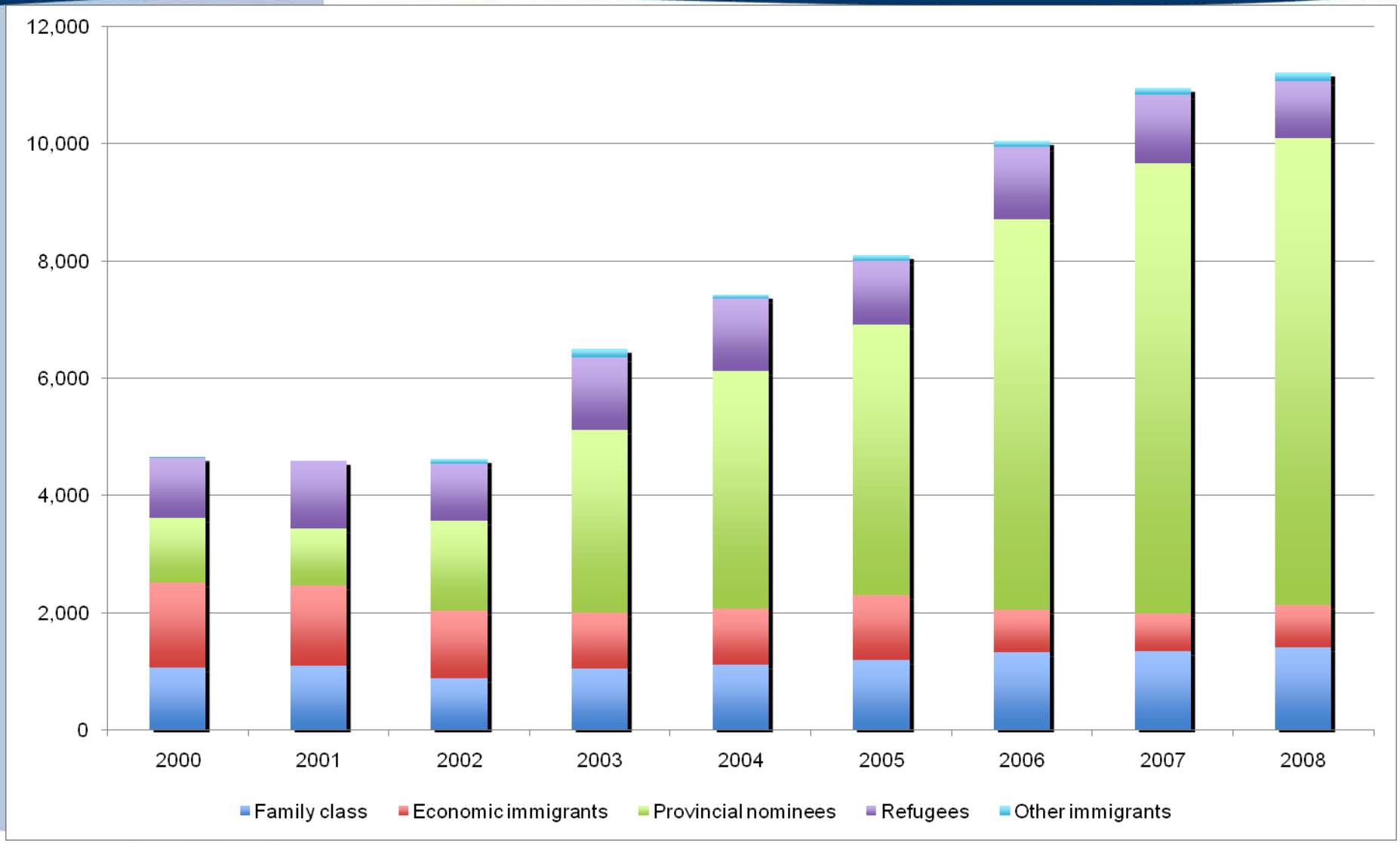
Manitoba Immigration 2000 to 2008, by category



Source: Manitoba Labour and Immigration, 2008

Brandon, Manitoba

Population = 41,511

- 1999: Maple Leaf Foods (MLF) pork processing plant opened
- 2001: MLF began foreign recruitment in Mexico; later in China.
- 2007: Highest rate of immigration growth in Manitoba
- 2009: Approximately 1,500 international recruits employed at MLF
  - –70% of employees are international recruits
  - –From Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia, China, Mauritius and Ukraine.

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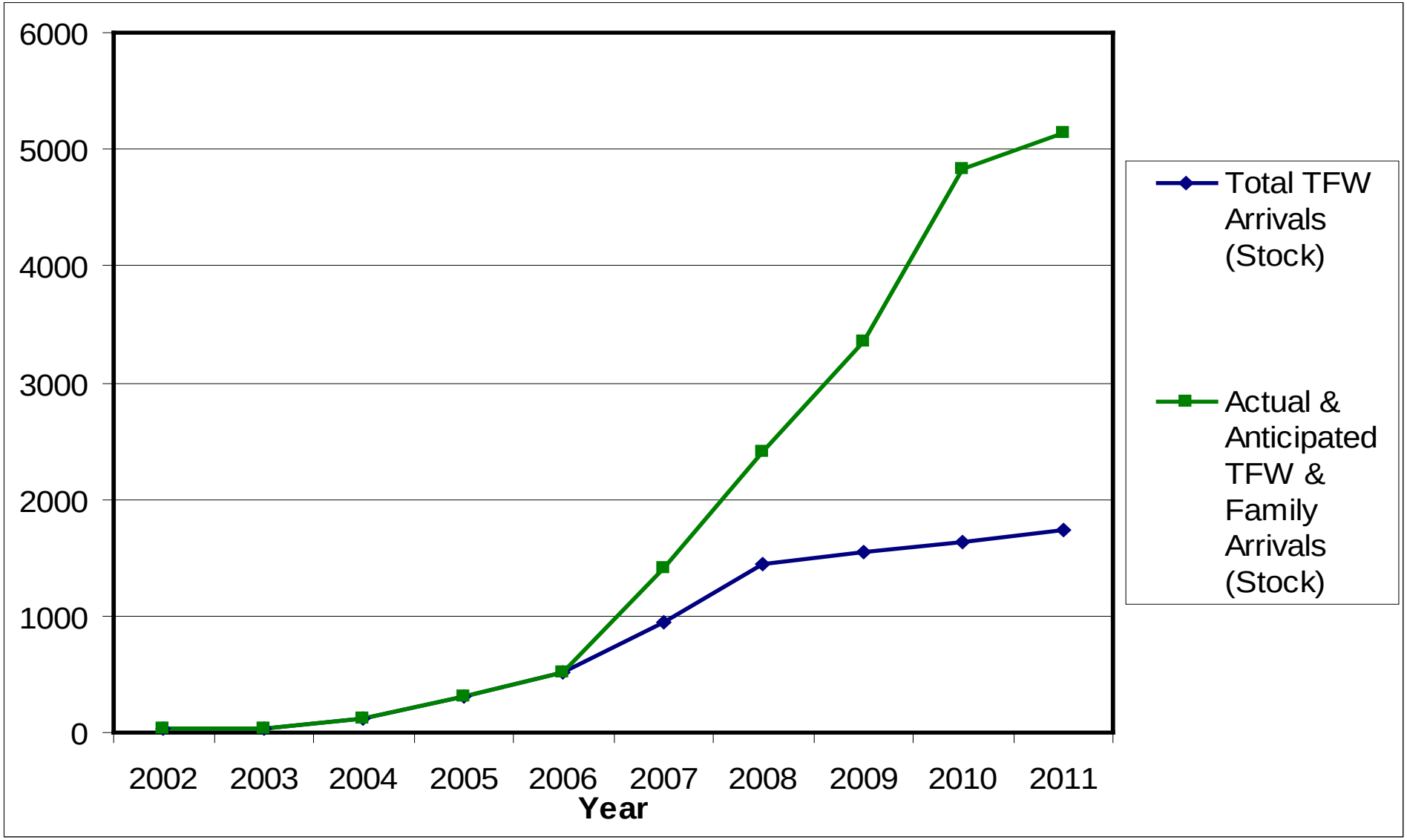
Significant New Immigration to Brandon



Brandon Welcoming Community and MIRIPS Survey

- Interview 200 recent immigrants and 200 long-term residents concerning the characteristics of a welcoming community and intercultural relations
- Themes include
  - Housing and Neighbourhoods
  - Service provision
  - Education and Employment
  - Multicultural Ideology
  - Tolerance/Prejudice
  - Attitudes Towards Immigration

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Selected Difficulties Experienced in Brandon

	Canadian Long Term Residents	Latin American New Residents	Chinese New Residents
Obtaining housing	3.6%	16.7%	34.5%
Finding foods you enjoy	4.3%	14.0%	25.0%
Communicating with people of different ethnic groups	5.8%	11.4%	31.3%
Dealing with climate	12.3%	17.7%	23.1%
Understanding ethnic and cultural differences	1.4%	6.5%	34.5%

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Current Employment

- Work at Maple Leaf Foods:
  - 78% of Latin American new residents
  - 82% of Chinese new residents
- Is your primary job an occupation related to your training and/or experience? (affirmative responses)
  - 73% of Canadian long-term residents
  - 34% of Latin American new residents
  - 8% of Chinese new residents

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Brandon as a Welcoming Community

Brandon is...

- A welcoming community:
  - –Over 80% of Canadian long-term residents agree
  - –Over 90% of Chinese and Latin American new residents agree
- A good place to live:
  - –99% of Canadian long-term residents agree
  - –100% all Latin American new residents agree
  - –71% of Chinese new residents agree
- A good place to raise a family:
  - –97% of Canadian long-term and Latin American residents agree
  - –43% of Chinese new residents agree

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Current RDI research

Welcoming communities

- Regional approach to WC in rural communities
  - Indicators of WC
  - WISR model
  - Housing strategies
  - Hiring TFW
- Research and policy implications

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What is a Welcoming Community?

A welcoming community attracts and retains newcomers

- identify & remove barriers
- promote a sense of belonging
- meet diverse individual needs
- offer services that promote successful integration

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Welcoming Community Model

Welcoming communities strive to improve capacity to inviting, settling, and retaining new residents

- ***Invite*** - attract and recruit immigrants to the community
- **Settle** – identify & remove barriers, and meet diverse individual needs, including sensitivity to and acceptance of cultural diversity
- **Retain** –integrate new residents into fabric of community and community celebrates cultural diversity of new residents

Esses et al. (2009) indicators: employment, housing, education.

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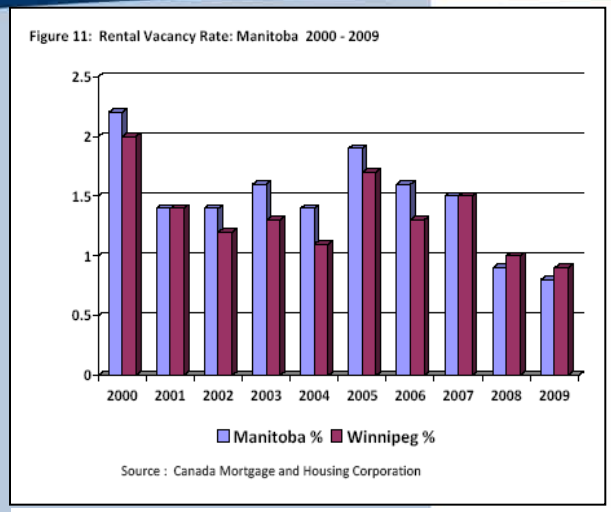
WC – Housing needs vary



Vacancy rates are very low & have been for several years

Immigrants require affordable, but not necessarily low income housing

New Immigrant

- **Invite** – different housing available, affordable, suitable
- **Settle** – Housing choices – starter, fix-it-up, to mid and upper range, location
- **Retain** – Housing choices for family, location

WC – Housing needs vary

Elements of housing strategies

- Settlement system
- Housing inventory
- Land supply
- Housing industry
- Market trends
- Regional market

Actors

- Federal government
- Provincial government
- Local municipalities
- Private sector
- Community organizations
- Individuals

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WC – Housing strategies

MB PNP (outside of Wpg)

4 centres	7,816	75%
6 centres	558	5%
Other	2,123	20%
Outside	10,497	100%

Typical immigrant in MB

80% married

70% with children

85% employed

66% spouse working

$49k avg income

18%< $30k/yr

Typically, immigrant household shave adequate earnings to afford a reasonable house.

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WC – Housing strategies

Figure 14: Small Lot High Density Ownership Units in Steinbach MB

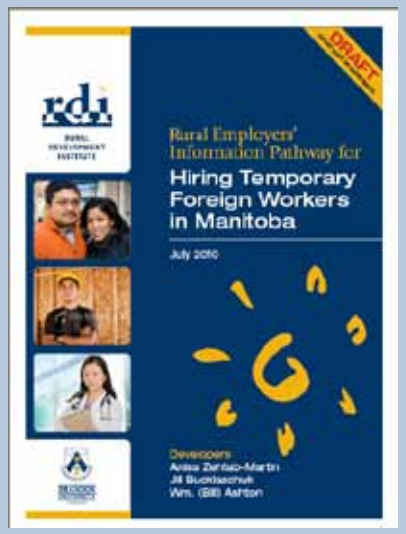
Larger regional centres

Greater demand — build new units

Figure 12: Minnedosa Old Town Office Converted to Temporary Housing

Smaller centres

Limited demand — modify existing stocks



Pathway: rural employers hiring TFWs

***Step 1**:* Confirm labour shortage: Cdn citizens

***Step 2**:* Register your MB Business

***Step 3**:* Recruit TFW

***Step 4**:* Apply for a Labour Market Opinion-LMO

***Step 5**:* Apply for Temporary Work Permit and Visa (if applicable)

***Step 6**:* TWF enters Canada

***Step 7**:* Welcome and settle employee

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Hiring TFW's: Employer's Views

At lot of them [TFW's] haven't lived in cold climates, economic standards are different

It's a big process for a small business

It's about a 2-year process now before you get all the paperwork in

Through the LMOs [Labour Market Opinion] there's no leeway it's like simon says – one wrong move and you're out…that's the thing we dislike most is the fact that once it's rejected you have to start all over again

Rural living isn't for everyone and sometimes that's the hardest thing

Our history with these people [TFWs] is that they are committed to the job

It's in our best interest [employer] to make sure that they're well settled & happy so we certainly endeavour to do that

There is a huge cost to recruitment, so it is better to retain the TFW's, settle them & have them contribute to the community

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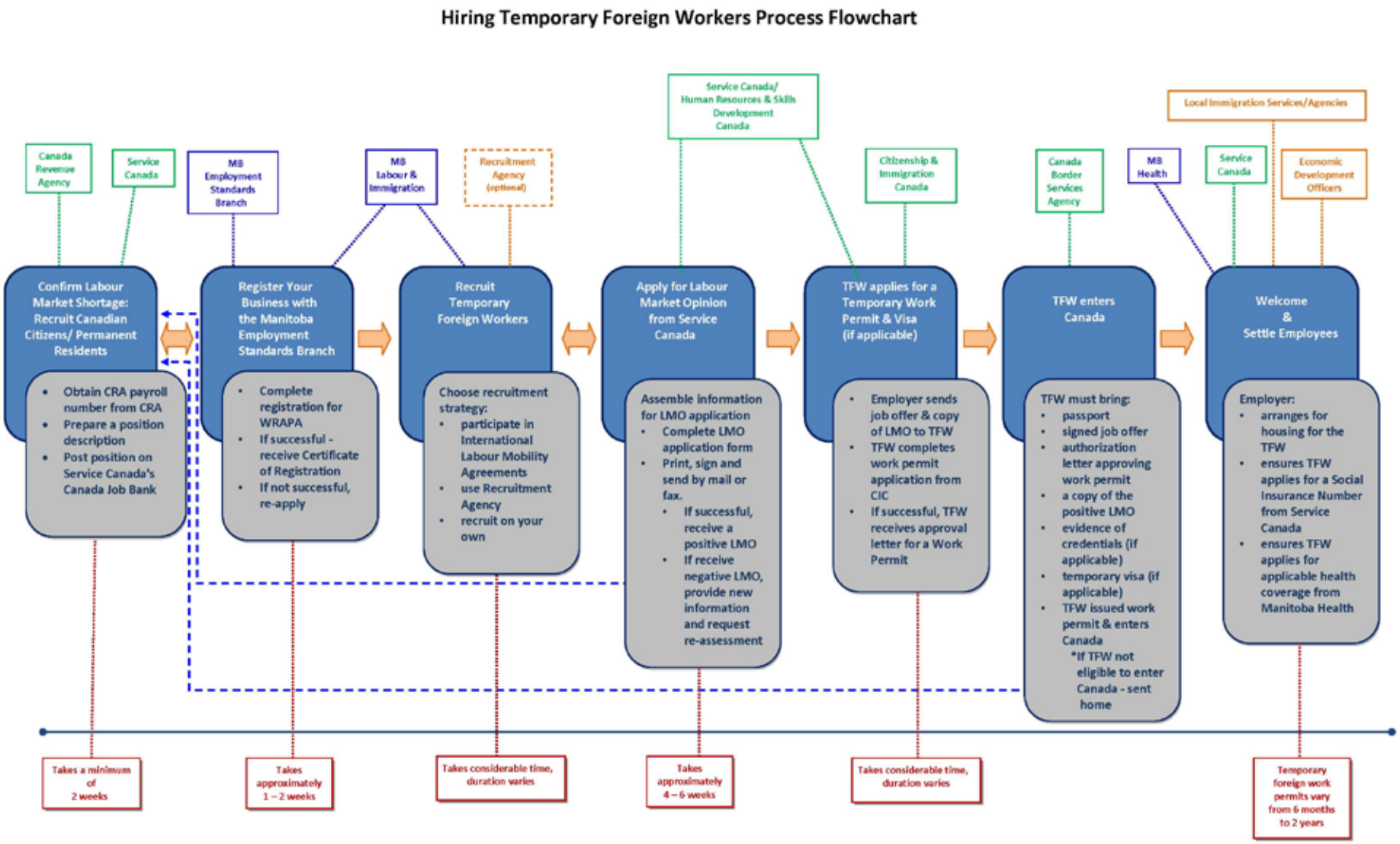
Hiring TFW: Information pathway



Hiring TFW

Step 1 Confirm Labour Market Shortage: Recruit Canadian Citizens and/or Permanent Residents

Why:

Who is involved in this step?

Duration:

Actions:

Result:

DRAFT

Gov't agencies reviewed Information Pathway for rural employers

-Sharing the Information Pathway

-Govt agencies

-Business service groups

-Employers

-**Challenge**: keeping Pathway current (evergreen)

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Policy implications

-Communicate gov't solution Better integrated immigration processes (for TFW) among gov't agencies

-Hiring process too lengthy Connect rural employment opportunities with available urban immigrants (provincially, nationally)?

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Further research of WISR model

- **What's practices working in WISR?** Strategies and engagement activities used by rural communities and service providers with new residents
- **Individual choices?** Sequence of strategies and activities by immigrants to become long term residents in rural communities

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Policy implications

- **Differentiated policy response**

How best to adjust public services in response to an uneven distribution of immigrants in rural regions?

- **Community development**

To what extent will rural immigration contribute to rural communities (economically, socially, culturally, politically, environmentally) and what is at risk if they do not?

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Acknowledgements

- Brandon Welcoming Communities Dialogue Group
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- Local governments, agencies and organizations

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