

Community Toolkit

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Land Acknowledgement



Manitoba's Health Care System provides health services in facilities located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Inuit, Anishinaabeg, Anishininewuk, Nehethowuk, Ininiwak, Nêhiyawak, Dakota Oyate and Denesuline Nations, and on the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge harms caused by colonialism and dedicate ourselves to building relationships and collaborating with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. Through this commitment, and rooted in truth and reconciliation, we will improve health experiences and outcomes for Indigenous people.



Message from **Hon. Uzoma Asagwara**

Deputy Premier, Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care

Across Manitoba, strong communities and a strong healthcare system go hand in hand, and we see the impact of that connection every single day.

Our government is taking action to ensure Manitobans can access the care they need, no matter where they live. At the heart of this work is a clear priority: growing, supporting, and retaining a strong healthcare workforce.

We know this is a shared effort. Municipal leaders and community partners are essential to our success. You play a vital role in welcoming healthcare professionals, helping them build connections, and creating the sense of belonging that turns a job into a long-term commitment. Those local relationships are often the reason people choose to stay, put down roots, and build their future in your community.

By working together, we can continue to welcome healthcare professionals to Manitoba and support them in building meaningful, lasting careers here. Thank you for your leadership, your partnership, and your ongoing commitment to a healthier Manitoba.

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara
Deputy Premier
Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care



Message from **Kathy Valentinos**

President of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities

Strong communities are built on care for one another, for our neighbours, and for the people who choose to serve in healthcare.

Throughout our province, physicians and healthcare workers are at the heart of our communities. They are there for life's biggest moments and its most vulnerable ones, providing comfort, expertise, and compassion when it matters most.

Municipalities understand the importance of creating places where healthcare professionals feel welcomed, supported, and connected. From friendly local life to meaningful relationships and a true sense of belonging, our communities offer more than just a place to work, they offer a place to call home.

We are proud to support efforts that help communities share their stories and showcase what makes them special. By working together, we can continue to attract and support the healthcare professionals who care for Manitobans every day.

Kathy Valentinos

President of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities



Photo credit: Travel Manitoba

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A scenic view of a lake with evergreen trees in the foreground and a rocky shore. The sky is a soft orange and blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The water is a deep blue-green, and the trees are dark green. The rocks in the foreground are grey and textured.

Manitoba's Health System

Across the world, healthcare systems are facing a shortage of skilled healthcare workers - and Manitoba is feeling that pressure too. Strengthening recruitment and retention within our healthcare system is a high priority for the Government of Manitoba.

This work is about more than meeting workforce targets. Healthcare providers are essential not only in delivering care, but in shaping the fabric of our communities. Reliable access to team-based primary care, hospital services close to home, and supportive transitions into personal care later in life are foundational to community growth, stability, and well-being.

Our greatest successes are seldomly built alone. In isolation. When health system partners collaborate closely with communities to welcome and support new providers, the likelihood of long-term retention grows significantly. Creating a sense of belonging, both professionally and personally, helps individuals put down roots and fully integrate into community life.

Although recruitment is becoming increasingly competitive worldwide, Manitoba communities offer meaningful opportunities for connection, balance, and quality of life. This guide was developed to help communities better understand the supports, relationships, and linkages that contribute to successful recruitment and long-term retention — whether individuals are arriving from another region or another country.

Developed in partnership with municipalities, this guide reflects many of the principles, best practices and tools that communities are using to support the long-term retention of providers. It is intended as a living resource — a starting point for continued dialogue and collaboration. As communities contribute their insights and lessons learned, it will continue to evolve and strengthen over time.

A Winning Partnership

In Manitoba, we understand that healthcare is delivered in hospitals and clinics, but wellness is built in our communities. The health system may provide the career, but people build their lives in their municipality.

While Manitoba Health and the Service Delivery Organizations continue to focus on recruiting skilled healthcare providers, the decision to stay is rarely about the job alone. It's about feeling connected. It's about schools, housing, recreation, friendships, and a sense of belonging. That's where communities make all the difference.

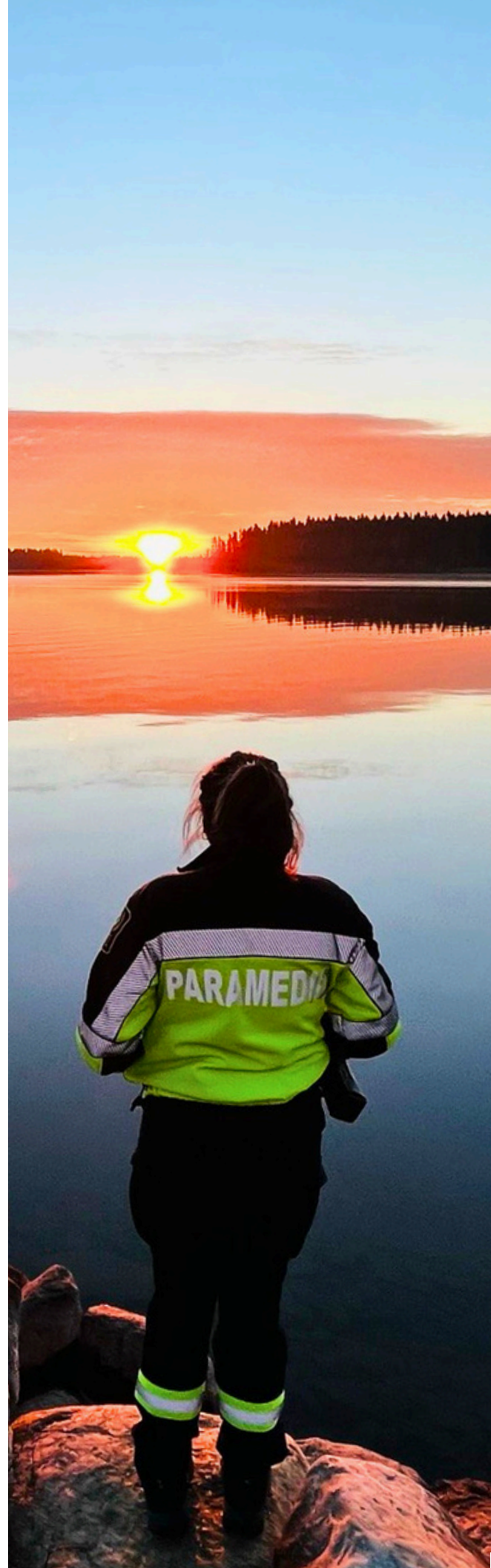
The New Reality

Manitoba is proud of its strong in-province training programs. At the same time, international recruitment will continue to play an important role in strengthening our healthcare workforce. This presents a meaningful opportunity for communities to grow, diversify, and thrive.

These highly skilled and motivated healthcare professionals are not only seeking rewarding careers — they are looking for safe, welcoming places to call home and raise their families. A warm welcome and strong local supports can shape their experience in lasting ways.

Why This Toolkit?

We heard that you want to help, but need practical ways to do so. This toolkit was developed with municipal officials and community partners in mind. It provides checklists, templates, and strategies to help you showcase what makes your community special and to support long-term recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals.



Why Manitoba?

Manitoba is a province of full of opportunity - with warm welcomes, natural beauty, diverse communities, and so much more. A healthcare career here provides benefits that go beyond the workplace, supporting providers and their families every step of the way.

Our communities offer an endless selection of lifestyle, culture and diversity. Whether a provider is interested in an outdoor lifestyle of lakes and open spaces, or taking part in festivals, dinner or get togethers, providers considering a move to Manitoba will find a richness of variety.

More importantly they will find some of the core elements that allow them to thrive as individuals and families. Childcare, including government subsidized spaces, safe and tight knit communities as well as affordability make it an attractive place not only to work but also to live.





Welcoming and diverse communities

Affordable and Balanced Living



Nature and outdoor adventure nearby

Meaningful Career Opportunities



In true Friendly Manitoba fashion, welcoming people isn't just something we say, it's something we do. Take what works best for your community from this toolkit, adapt it to fit your local needs, and share your successes along the way. We'd love to hear about them.

If you have questions, ideas, or suggestions, reach out to:
[***info@healthcareersmanitoba.ca***](mailto:info@healthcareersmanitoba.ca).

The Many Partners That Participate in Recruitment

Successful recruitment relies on a number of partners working towards a shared goal. When we work together, the outcome is greater than any one effort alone. It creates a positive, sustainable recruitment and retention experience — strengthening both providers and the communities they serve.



Manitoba Health and Service Delivery Organizations

Our health care systems promote opportunities, support candidate recruitment and navigation, match individuals to positions, and guide providers through onboarding to ensure a smooth start.



Regulatory Bodies

Organizations such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba, as well as the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba and the College of Licensed Practice Nurses of Manitoba play a key role in assessing qualifications and supporting candidates through the licensure process so they can practice in Manitoba.



Education Institutions

Including University of Manitoba and Red River College provide high-quality training programs and support clinical learners completing placements in communities across the province, often creating early connections that lead to long-term practice.



Local Communities

Communities play an essential role in helping providers and their families settle in and feel at home. Evidence shows that healthcare professionals and their families are more likely to stay and feel greater satisfaction in their environment when communities actively support their recruitment and retention.



When a healthcare professional shows interest, we come together with our recruitment partners to quickly showcase our community — helping them truly picture a life here.

— Town of Minnedosa

Different Providers, Different Needs

Recruitment is not one-size-fits-all. A family physician arriving from Nigeria will have very different needs than a Nurse Practitioner relocating from Toronto, or a student completing a residency in Dauphin. Understanding who is coming helps communities tailor their welcome to what matters most. Four common profiles you may encounter:

The International Recruit

- **Who they are:** Skilled professionals, often arriving with a spouse and children. They may be experiencing a Canadian winter, the Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) system, or rural Canadian life for the first time.
- **They may be wondering:** "Will my family be safe and supported? Will we feel isolated? Will our culture and faith be respected?"

The Canadian Relocator

- **Who they are:** Professionals moving from larger urban centres, for affordability, shorter commutes, and a better quality of life.
- **They may be wondering:** "Did I make the right move? Will there be enough to do? Is 'Friendly Manitoba' real?"

The Learner

- **Who they are:** Students completing clinical rotations, often visiting your community for the first time, while balancing busy schedules.
- **They may be wondering:** "Could I build a life here? What assumptions did I have that may not be true? Could I return long-term?"

The "Boomerang"

- **Who they are:** Someone returning to rural Manitoba to raise a family close to home, often with a spouse or partner new to the community.
- **They may be wondering:** "Will my partner feel they belong? does my partner fit in? Are there meaningful career opportunities for them?"





A Warm Welcome

Recruitment brings providers to your community. Settlement is what helps them stay.

Across Manitoba and beyond, successful communities take an active, hands-on role in welcoming new providers and their families. They recognize that retention doesn't happen by chance, it's built through intentional support, strong local connections, and a community-wide effort to help people feel at home.

Healthcare professionals can only focus on delivering care when their lives outside of work are stable and supported. Housing, childcare, schools, employment for partners, and social connection all matter and communities that step up in these areas see lasting impact.

Finding Housing

Communities that are successful in attracting and retaining healthcare professionals think ahead about housing. That might mean identifying short-term, transitional options for those arriving quickly, or working alongside candidates with longer timelines to help them find permanent housing that fits their needs.

Support often goes beyond housing itself. Many communities help new providers navigate the essentials of daily life—how to get around, establishing a bank account, where to set up utilities, how to access reliable internet and mobile services, and what to expect in a Manitoba winter. Small gestures, like guidance on winter readiness or transportation options, can make a big difference in helping someone feel prepared and confident in their new environment.



Accessing Child Care and Education

One of the highest priorities for providers is to ensure that their families will also be able to settle into the local community. Communities that retain healthcare professionals prioritize family needs from day one.

They understand that access to childcare and education is often a deciding factor in whether someone stays. They come prepared with answers for availability of childcare spaces, waitlists, school options and actively support families through registration, tours, and understanding the system.

They also recognize that retention is a whole-family effort. Supporting spouses and partners, particularly in finding employment or community connections, is a key part of building long-term stability.



Photo credit: Travel Manitoba



Photo credit: Travel Manitoba

Faith, Food and Culture



Photo credit: Travel Manitoba

Feeling at home goes beyond logistics, it's about connection and identity.

Communities that create a strong sense of belonging help new providers stay connected to what matters most to them. This might include linking them to local faith communities, cultural groups, or places where they can access familiar foods and ingredients.

These connections help bridge their past and present, creating comfort, continuity, and a deeper sense of belonging in their new home.

Social Connection

Retention is built on relationships. Communities that keep healthcare providers engaged create intentional opportunities for belonging from day one.

By introducing newcomers to local ambassadors, social circles, and community activities, they help build early relationships that make a lasting impact. Whether it's through sports, arts, cultural events, or volunteering, these opportunities allow providers to find balance, build friendships, and feel part of something bigger.

When people feel welcomed, connected, and included, they're more likely to see their future, and their home, in the community.

Ready to take
that next step?



Discover **Canada's Healthcare Infusion initiative**, a national, volunteer-driven movement connecting healthcare professionals with communities that are ready to welcome them, supporting both recruitment and long-term retention through local action and connection.

Learn more and get involved:
engageq.notion.site/infusionhosts

Photo credit: Travel Manitoba





Community Ideas Worth Sharing

Communities across Manitoba are stepping up and showing what's possible when it comes to attracting and retaining healthcare professionals. This work is already making a difference and there's an opportunity for your community to do the same. From grassroots ideas to coordinated regional efforts, the examples below highlight practical approaches you can adapt, build on, and make your own.

The "Red Carpet" Site Visit

Make the first impression count. While health authorities lead the clinical orientation and facility tour, communities play a powerful role in shaping the broader experience of arriving and settling in. From the first welcome to everyday connections, it's often the community touchpoints that define how supported, included, and at home a new healthcare professional feels.

- **A Personal Touch:** In Minnedosa, the community prioritizes connection. Quick community tours, local brochures, and informal meet-and-greets help candidates picture life beyond the workplace.
- **Go the Extra Mile:** Morden offers airport pickups, guided tours, and hosting a casual dinner can transform a visit into a memorable welcome.



The Community Ambassador

Create a “first friend” connection. Starting somewhere new can feel overwhelming, but having a welcoming point of contact makes all the difference. A volunteer community ambassador, outside of their direct supervisor, can offer friendly guidance, local tips, and a genuine sense of connection, helping newcomers feel supported, included, and at home from the very beginning.

- **Volunteer Power:** The Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet relies on volunteer-led welcoming where residents introduce recruits to the outdoor lifestyle and community events.
- **Cultural Connection:** Winkler leverages their existing diversity where a number of physicians arriving from the same country can get to know one another. Connecting new recruits with established families can turn uncertainty into belonging.

“

Designate a ‘First Friend.’ Pair newcomers with a local volunteer to help them feel welcomed, connected, and at home.”

— RM of Lac du Bonnet

Support for the Whole Family

We are recruiting providers, but welcoming entire families. A successful move is more than a job it's about building a life. That means ensuring partners feel supported in their own transition and that families have access to the services that will help them settle and thrive in their new community.

- **Employment Linkages:** One key area of focus is spousal employment. Connect the spouse with the Chamber of Commerce, local employers, or business networks early before they arrive to set up job interviews.
- **Transitional Housing:** Moving is stressful. Morden solved this by offering a place to stay. Short-term accommodation reduces stress during exploratory visits or initial relocation. When families feel settled, providers are far more likely to stay.



Events & Social Integration

Don't just invite them—include them. Manitoba's festivals and community events are a powerful way to build social connections and help healthcare professionals feel connected to both their workplace and their community.

- **Show off the Spirit:** Winkler focuses on vibrant festivals and community pride. Invite your recruit to be a guest of honour at the local parade, rodeo, or fall supper.
- **The Dinner Table:** Sometimes the most powerful strategy is simple like Morden hosting social dinners. Sharing a meal, extending an invitation, or making space at the table creates the emotional bond that helps an individual begin to see themselves as part of the community.

Where to Start

We have covered a lot of ground. But you don't need to do it all at once. The most successful communities didn't build their programs in a day, they started with one intentional act of welcome. Here are some pointers to get you started:



Borrow best practices from other communities. This guide was intended to both highlight the great work happening in communities already and inspire you to try out your own local version.



Identify and promote your own special cultural and recreational assets. Help providers and their families understand why people love living in your community. Help tell the story of their home being more than just a career but a lifestyle.



Bring focus to your support structures. Housing, childcare, schools, spiritual and social inclusion help bridge the challenges in transitioning to a new community.



Engage the broader community. More than municipal officials, your broader community plays a role in building social connections, putting on events, cultural celebrations and bringing local people together.

Begin building the systems to support recruitment and retention. With many of the same activities occurring with each recruitment, creating templates and checklists helps make the process manageable and allows you to keep improving with each round.



Photo credit: Travel Manitoba



The Future is *bright*

We often talk about the challenges in healthcare. It is time to talk about the opportunities.

Manitoba communities have something that no salary grid or contract can offer: **belonging.**

The most effective recruitment strategy isn't found in a brochure, it's a neighbour. It's the person who drops off a casserole, the coach who welcomes a new player, and the mayor who takes the time to say, "**Welcome home.**"

We are partners in this system. We see a future where we match and hire skilled professionals while giving them great reasons to stay. This is not a one size fits all approach. It's working to understand the needs of the providers coming to your community and how to support them in getting settled, walking alongside them to find a place to call home.

Together, we build more than a workforce. We build lasting relationships where communities are able to continue to grow and thrive.

“

We go the extra mile — from airport pickups and community tours to gathering around the dinner table — because every connection we make today **helps build a stronger, brighter future for our community.**

— City of Morden

Questions? We Are Here to Help

Across each region, there are dedicated representatives available to support your community's recruitment efforts. These individuals are your direct link into the health system, helping to bridge local initiatives with system-wide opportunities and needs. They can offer guidance on recruitment pathways, share insights into what healthcare professionals are looking for, and connect you with the right supports along the way.

- **Prairie Mountain Health:** prairiemountainhealth.ca
- **Southern Health-Santé Sud:** southernhealth.ca
- **Cancer Care Manitoba:** cancercare.mb.ca
- **Interlake Eastern Regional Health Authority:** ierha.ca
- **Northern Health Region:** northernhealthregion.com
- **Winnipeg Regional Health Authority:** wrha.mb.ca
- **Shared Health:** sharedhealthmb.ca

