

National Coalition Launches #WelcomingEconomy for Refugees Campaign to Connect Employers and Refugees in Canada

TORONTO, ON -- (May 12, 2022) Today the Refugee Jobs Agenda Roundtable, jointly with other partners, is launching the #WelcomingEconomy for Refugees campaign, a coordinated and unified employer-led effort focused on highlighting the social and economic contributions and successes of refugees. The campaign will feature business leaders in a series of videos aimed at encouraging and supporting the recruitment and hiring of refugee talent across Canada.

Under the leadership of The Honourable Ratna Omidvar and Darrell Pinto, who co-chair the Roundtable, and with the strategic coordination from World Education Services (WES), the campaign brings together over 50 organizations from across Canada, including businesses from multiple industries.

The #WelcomingEconomy for Refugees campaign marks the second phase of the Roundtable, a coalition of 83 organizations that was initially established to support Syrian refugees and connect them to employment opportunities in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

Data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Canada (UNHCR Canada) show that [51 percent of refugees have broad experience and in-demand skill sets](#). They are ready and able to fill positions in areas such as architecture, software engineering, and health care in the Canadian labour market.

“Finding and retaining talent is the biggest challenge for Canadian employers today,” says Darrell Pinto, co-chair of the Roundtable. “Refugees not only bring diverse perspectives and a wealth of skills and experience. They have grit, they are adaptable, and they are self-driven. Through this campaign we hope to connect business leaders to the resources and tools they need to ensure they create a welcoming, inclusive, and diverse workplace – a place where refugees want to come to work and stay to work.”

With a renewed mandate in its second phase, the Roundtable will continue to increase refugee access to employment opportunities by identifying new employment-focused initiatives, approaching new stakeholders, and exploring programs and resources that support refugee entrepreneurs. The Roundtable plans to focus on Afghan and Ukrainian refugees.

“Canada has a proud history of welcoming refugees and asylum seekers,” says The Honourable Ratna Omidvar, Roundtable co-chair. “As crises around the world intensify, our renewed commitment to welcoming refugees is not only imperative but wise. From private sponsorship to work-integrated learning opportunities for refugees, employers have a crucial role to play in the integration of these newcomers. Employers who are making refugees part of the design and delivery of their refugee programs are better leveraging the education, skills, and experience of refugees, hence adding innovation and resilience to their workplace.”

The campaign has benefited from the generous contributions and leadership of the Alliance pour l'accueil & l'intégration des immigrants, New Canadians, Northpine Foundation, Refugee 613, the Tent Partnership for Refugees, and World Education Services. The #WelcomingEconomy for Refugees campaign partners are listed below:

- [Achēv](#)
- [Alliance pour l'accueil & l'intégration des immigrants](#)
- [ACCES Employment](#)
- [Bonfire Interactive](#)
- [Calgary Catholic Immigration Society](#)
- [Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council](#)
- [Carty House](#)
- [CERC in Migration and Integration, Toronto Metropolitan University \(formerly Ryerson University\)](#)
- [City of Toronto](#)
- [CivicAction](#)
- [Conference Board of Canada](#)
- [COSTI](#)
- [Danby](#)
- [Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council](#)
- [Halifax Partnership](#)
- [Hire Immigrants Ottawa](#)
- [Immigrant Centre of Manitoba](#)
- [Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia](#)
- [Immploy](#)
- [Impakt Foundation](#)
- [Impakt Corp](#)
- [Institute for Canadian Citizenship](#)
- [Jumpstart Refugee Talent](#)
- [Lifeline Afghanistan](#)
- [LiUNA](#)
- [Lutherwood](#)
- [Magnet](#)
- [NeedsList](#)
- [New Brunswick Multicultural Council](#)
- [New Horizons Media](#)
- [New Canadians](#)
- [Niagara Workforce Planning Board](#)
- [Northpine Foundation](#)
- [Ontario Tourism Education Corporation](#)
- [Opportunities for Employment](#)
- [Peace by Chocolate](#)
- [Refugee 613](#)
- [Regina Open Door Society](#)
- [Saskatoon Open Door Society](#)
- [Starbucks Canada](#)
- [Success Skills Centre](#)

- [Syrian Canadian Foundation](#)
- [Talent Beyond Boundaries](#)
- [TD Bank](#)
- [Tent Partnership for Refugees](#)
- [The Beer Store](#)
- [Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council](#)
- [Windmill Microlending](#)
- [World Education Services](#) (WES)
- [Zezafoun Syrian Cuisine](#)

To find out how you can take part in the Refugee Jobs Agenda Roundtable, visit welcomingeconomy.ca.

Quick Facts:

- In 2021, Canada announced it would resettle 40,000 Afghan refugees. Thus far, the country has already welcomed more than 12,000 under different streams ([Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#)).
- Forty-eight (48) percent of newly arrived refugees settle in smaller cities and towns and join the workforce, filling critical labour gaps in these regions (UNHCR Canada).
- It is proven that within five years of settling, refugees contribute more in income tax than they utilize in public services and benefits when they first arrive. Data from the 2014 tax year show that refugees who have been in Canada for this time frame earn middle-class incomes (UNHCR Canada).
- Refugees use their experience, skills, and talents to start businesses and create jobs for themselves and other Canadians (UNHCR Canada).

About the Refugee Jobs Agenda Roundtable

Co-chaired by Senator Ratna Omidvar and Darrell Pinto, the Refugee Jobs Agenda Roundtable offers a platform for employers, employment and immigrant-serving agencies, and government representatives to convene with a goal to increase refugees' access to employment opportunities that utilize the talent and skills they bring to Canada. Since it was established in 2015, the Roundtable has planned and executed multiple practical, employment-focused initiatives to support the connection of refugees to employment opportunities.

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