

#WelcomingEconomy for Refugees 2023

Fact Sheet

“Canada is a global leader in helping skilled refugees connect with employers struggling to find workers in critical areas, while giving newcomers the opportunity to restart their careers and their lives here in Canada. Our government will continue to develop and scale innovative immigration measures to help employers address their critical labour shortages and provide refugees with the opportunity to live in safety while rebuilding their lives.”

– **The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.**

General Refugee Data

- At the end of 2022, nearly 32 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced and by April 2023, the war in Ukraine had forced over 8 million people to flee their homeland and cross borders in search of safety.¹
- As of April 2023, more than 30,000 Afghan refugees have now arrived in Canada since the opening of specialized resettlement streams in August 2021. This is a significant milestone on the road to resettling 40,000 Afghans by the end of this year.²
- The most recent cohort of arrivals is comprised of individuals who supported the Canada's military mission in Afghanistan, privately sponsored refugees, and their families.
- Although the achievement is welcomed and celebrated by many advocates, many Afghans in need of support remain in limbo. IRCC explained that given the complexity of many cases, the processing of such applications will likely take significantly longer. The lack of a diplomatic presence has presented significant obstacles that make it increasingly difficult to intervene. Canada continues to partner with local and international allies to ensure Afghans can be supported in a safe and timely manner.
- As of March 16, 2023, over 615,000 applications through the Canada-Ukraine authorization for emergency travel (CUAET) have been approved while approximately just over 133,000 have arrived in Canada (Source: IRCC).³
- On February 1, 2023, the Canadian Parliament passed a motion to resettle 10,000 vulnerable Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities from Central Asia to Canada (Source: IRCC).
- As of end of February 2023, the federal government has fast-tracked visa applications and given priority to affected individuals for temporary, PR and refugee applications from the earthquake hit areas of Turkey and Syria (Source: Toronto Star).⁴

¹ <https://www.weforum.org/impact/finding-work-after-fleeing-war-companies-aim-to-help-refugees-find-jobs/>

² <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-ottawa-hits-30000-afghan-refugee-milestone-but-many-still-left-in/>

³ <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/ukraine-measures/key-figures.html>

Economic contribution of refugees in Canada⁴

- **Demography:** Canada's population aged 65 and older has increased by 733,900 from 2019 to 2022, far outpacing growth in the core working-age population. These older age groups continue to have lower labour force participation rates than those of core-age Canadians. Refugees have resettled in every part of Canada – as far north as Whitehorse, Yukon; as far east as St. John's, Newfoundland; and as far west as Prince Rupert, British Columbia. Of refugees who arrived between 2011 and 2016, 48% live in smaller cities and towns, compared to 44% of all immigrants
- **Labour Force Participation:** As of 2020, 72.6% of refugees in Canada were of working age (between 24 and 54 years old), and their labour force participation rate was 68.2%
- **Employment Rates:** Among working-age refugees in Canada, the employment rate was 59.7% in 2020. This is lower than the employment rate for Canadian-born individuals (71.2%), but higher than the employment rate for recent immigrants (53.9%)
- **Entrepreneurship:** Refugees use their diverse skillsets and talents to start businesses and create jobs for themselves and other Canadians. A study by the Canadian government found that in 2018, 14.8% of refugees in Canada were self-employed, compared to 12.3% of Canadian-born individuals
- **Economic Contribution:** Over time, refugees pay more in income tax on average than they receive in public benefits and services. However, this does not represent all taxes paid (like sales taxes) since it only includes income tax. Refugees increasingly narrow the gap between income tax paid and public benefits and services received the longer they live in Canadian provinces and territories. In 2016, refugees in Canada contributed \$4.7billion to the economy, including \$1.4billion in taxes and \$3.3billion in consumer spending
- **Innovation and Creativity:** Refugees bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the workforce, which can lead to increased innovation and creativity. A study by the University of Ottawa found that refugee entrepreneurs in Canada are more likely to introduce new products and services than Canadian-born entrepreneurs

⁴ <https://www.unhcr.ca/in-canada/refugees-in-canada/>