



Welcoming Newcomers to Canada

Policy Recommendations on Immigration

In 1891 the first Ukrainians came to Canada seeking a better life for their families. Over the last century, Ukrainian immigrants have made significant contributions to Canada in government and business. Hardworking Ukrainian immigrants provided the skills and labour necessary for key industries such as agriculture, mining, and transportation, to thrive. Similarly, newcomers from around the world have come to Canada and enriched this great land with their hard work, innovation and culture. Over 125 years later, Canada remains a key destination for newcomers seeking economic opportunity, political and religious freedom, and greater peace and security. The shared experiences of recent newcomers from Ukraine and across the world continue to inform our understanding of the best pathways for their success.

Together with its member organizations and provincial councils, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) has developed an informed, front-line perspective on the issues facing new Canadians as they settle and integrate into their new country. We know that strong public policy can make all the difference in the success of newcomers; the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP), for example, has contributed to positive outcomes with the highest employment rate among newcomers to Canada (76% in Saskatchewan compared to 70% nationally). Our recommendations reflect an ongoing dialogue on the work in which we are engaged to build more support, certainty, and consistency into Canada's immigration system.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Standardize Service Delivery
- Streamline Accreditation
- Build Certainty for Workers and Employers
- Create Pathways to Permanent Residence
- Establish the Roadmap to Visa-free Travel for Ukrainian Citizens

Recommendations

Standardize Service Delivery

The existing patchwork of services for newcomers results in inconsistent opportunities for job skills training, language training, housing and health care access, networking assistance, and educational opportunities.

The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to work cooperatively with provinces, territories and municipalities to develop more comprehensive settlement supports for new Canadians and ensure consistency across jurisdictions, including stable funding for service delivery across the country. The UCC will advocate for ethno-cultural, community-based settlement services, which have been proven to result in better outcomes for new Canadians.

Streamline Accreditation

Recognition of international credentials remains a serious challenge for many new Canadians, often resulting in many years of lost contributions to Canada as well as to personal income and work experience. An analysis of 2006 Canadian census data shows that just under one-quarter (24%) of employed foreign-educated, university-level immigrants were working in a regulated occupation that matched their field of study, compared to 62% of their Canadian-born counterparts.

The UCC calls on the Government of Canada work with the provinces as well as professional and trade associations to create a robust, comprehensive, and streamlined system to assess international education and experience, expedite Canadian recertification where standards match or are exceeded, and help identify a streamlined gap-filling route for newcomers who need to add to their existing training and certification to meet Canadian standards.



We need to develop more comprehensive settlement supports for new Canadians.

Build Certainty for Workers and Employers

The Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program is an invaluable tool for Canadian businesses and households to meet labour requirements, and allows potential immigrants to gain valuable work experience in Canada.

The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to create an expedited vetting process for reputable and trusted employers along with a streamlined application process to help to fill labour shortages more quickly, resulting in more certainty for both workers and employers. The Canadian government should also clearly inform newcomers arriving through the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program of the pathways to permanent residence that may be available to them.

Create Pathways to Canadian Citizenship through Permanent Residency

The UCC welcomes the recent announcement by the federal government to create two new pilot projects for caregiving pathways to permanent residence. Meeting a critical need for domestic, child-rearing, and elderly care, international caregivers often leave their own families for extended periods of time to care for Canadian families, and deserve more certainty as they embark on the citizenship process. The UCC fully supports the new program changes, which include the assessment for Permanent Residence (PR) eligibility before individuals begin working in Canada, as well as the granting of less restrictive work permits.

Welcome Permanent Residents to the Canadian Forces

Permanent residents in Canada are permitted to serve in police forces, in the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA), in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and in other first responder positions. There is significant interest from permanent residents in the Ukrainian Canadian community to also be permitted to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), as permanent residents in the US, the UK and France already serve in their respective military forces. Permitting permanent residents to serve would equip them with a pathway to success in Canada and would also help to address current recruitment gaps in the CAF.

The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to remove the restriction that permanent residents of Canada can only serve in the Canadian Armed Forces in exceptional cases.

Establish the Roadmap to Visa-free Travel for Ukrainian Citizens

Residents from Ukraine should have increased opportunities for travel in order to develop trade and business relationships with Canada. Since 2017, Brazilian citizens who have successfully obtained a visitor's visa to Canada in the last ten years have been eligible to apply for an eTA (Electronic Travel Authorization). ETAs enable trusted travellers to make more frequent trips to Canada and are valid for up to five years.

The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to offer the option of an Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) to Ukrainian citizens who have demonstrated a commitment to Canada's immigration principles and have demonstrated past compliance with Canadian immigration law, as part of Canada's broader approach to international trade, including the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA) which came into force in 2017.

The UCC will continue to advocate for visa-free travel for Ukrainian citizens visiting Canada, in support of increasing bilateral relations and improving economic ties. ■