



## 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. Hardworking Ukrainian immigrants provided the skills and labor necessary for key industries to thrive, such as agriculture, mining and transportation. Similarly, newcomers from around the world have come to Canada and enriched this great land with their hard work, innovation, and cultural contributions.

Over 130 years later, Canada remains a key destination for newcomers seeking economic opportunity, political and religious freedom, and peace and security. The shared experiences of recent newcomers from Ukraine and around the world inform our understanding of the best pathways for their success.

The UCC, member organizations, provincial councils, local branches and local Ukrainian Canadian organizations have worked for many years on issues facing new Canadians as they settle and integrate into their new country and have developed informed, front-line perspectives in meeting these challenges.

Effective public policy can make all the difference in the success of newcomers. The Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program and Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program, for example, has contributed to positive outcomes and high employment rates among newcomers to Canada (76.1% labour force participation among immigrants landed 5 years earlier or less in Manitoba and Saskatchewan compared to a national average of 71.4% in 2020).

#### **OUR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Standardize Service Delivery
- Streamline Accreditation
- Build Certainty for Workers and Employers
- Create Pathways to Permanent Residence
- Welcome Newcomers to the Canadian Armed Forces
- Liberalize travel for Ukrainian citizens and explore opportunities through the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement

## Recommendations

### *Standardize Service Delivery*

The existing patchwork of services for newcomers, temporary foreign workers and international students results in inconsistent opportunities for job skills training, language training, housing and health care access, networking assistance, and educational opportunities. Addressing these issues requires federal government coordination with provinces, territories and municipalities to develop standardized settlement supports for new Canadians, ensuring consistency across jurisdictions.

Ethnocultural, community-based services, such as those provided by the UCC Saskatchewan Provincial Council in coordination with the Government of Saskatchewan, and Ukrainian Canadian community-based social services and immigration services organizations in other provinces, have been proven to result in positive outcomes for new Canadians.

*The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to take into account the experiences and practices of community-based ethnocultural organizations when developing services for newcomers.*

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown the importance of making crucial government information available in as many languages as possible to ensure that newcomers to Canada are well-informed about government programs and public health directives, and that they receive timely updates. The UCC has endeavored to provide information to our organizations and membership in Ukrainian as much as possible. Other translation services (as, for example, the translation of the Saskatchewan Driver's Handbook in Ukrainian), have had positive impacts on newcomers' successful integration into Canadian society.

*The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to dedicate more resources into translating important government information, documents and directives into as many languages as possible, including Ukrainian.*



*We need to develop more comprehensive settlement supports 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 and family incomes and work experience. Foreign-educated university level immigrants work in regulated occupations that match their fields of study at far lower rates than their Canadian-born counterparts.

Public policy decisions on streamlining on accreditation can have lasting positive impacts for both newcomers and their employers. The Government of Alberta, for example, has adopted the *Fair Registration Practices Act*, which applies to 72 professional regulatory organizations that oversee the licensing and certification of over 170 professions, and establishes the Fairness for Newcomers Office, which “works with professional regulatory organizations to streamline, simplify and accelerate the assessment of qualifications by eliminating barriers to registration that newcomers may experience.”

*The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to work with provinces and territories, along with professional and trade associations to create a robust, comprehensive and streamlined accreditation system, which would: 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 must add to their existing training and certification to meet Canadian standards.*

### *Build Certainty for Workers and Employers*

Almost 470,000 foreign nationals have a work permit that became effective in 2019, compared to 390,000 in 2018 and 340,000 in 2017. This program has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-21.

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program is an invaluable resource for Canadian businesses and households to meet labour requirements and provides potential immigrants with an opportunity to gain valuable work experience in Canada. Citizens of Ukraine benefit from this program, working in construction, agriculture, private households and many other fields of employment 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 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 program of the pathways to permanent residence that may be available to them.*

*Create Pathways to Permanent Residence*



The UCC welcomes the April 2021 announcement by the Government of Canada of a pathway to permanent residence for over 90,000 essential workers and international graduates, together with three streams with no intake caps for French-speaking or bilingual candidates.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the demand for health care workers and other essential workers, such as caregivers, has increased markedly in Canada. Meeting a critical need for domestic, child-rearing and elderly care, international caregivers often leave their own families for extended periods of time and deserve more certainty as they embark on the citizenship process.

*The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to explore further opportunities for creating new pathways and expanding existing pathways to permanent residence, including the granting of less restrictive work permits.*

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

*Welcome Newcomers to the Canadian Armed Forces*

Permanent residents are permitted to serve in police forces, 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), similarly to permanent residents in the United States, United Kingdom, and France, who serve in their respective countries' militaries. Permitting permanent residents to serve in the CAF would equip them with a pathway to success in Canada and would also help 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.*

*Liberalize travel for Ukrainian citizens and explore opportunities through the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement*

Once the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic are overcome, increased travel between Canada and Ukraine will again have positive economic, social and cultural benefits for both countries. The UCC welcomes the establishment of the Canada-Ukraine Mobility Working Group, which will “let Canada and Ukraine share best practices on migration management, increase recruitment, promote Canada’s economic immigration programs and further strengthen co-operation on migration-related matters.”

Ukrainian citizens have enjoyed visa-free travel with the European Union since 2017, greatly benefiting both Ukrainian citizens and the countries of the EU. Canadian citizens may travel to Ukraine for visits of up to 90 days without a visa. Currently, Ukrainian citizens who would like to travel to Canada require a visa.

*The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to work with Ukraine to establish a clear roadmap to visa-free travel for Ukrainian citizens on short-term visits to Canada.*

As Canada and Ukraine work to increase mobility between the two countries, it is important that Ukrainian citizens applying for Canadian visas receive services that are timely and that standards for granting visas be accurately and fairly applied.

*The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to provide adequate resources to the Embassy of Canada in Ukraine to ensure that visa applications filed by Ukrainian citizens are responded to in a timely fashion and that standards for granting visas be accurately and fairly applied.*

The Youth Mobility Agreement, which the governments of Canada and Ukraine have been negotiating for several years, once finalized, will provide important opportunities for Canadian and Ukrainian youth to travel between the two countries, strengthening the people-to-people ties between Canada and Ukraine.

*The UCC calls on the Governments of Canada and Ukraine to finalize the Youth Mobility Agreement.*

In 2017, Canada and Ukraine signed the historic Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA), which is currently being modernized. Several of the free trade agreements that Canada has with other countries are aimed at not only facilitating trade relationships but also supporting businesses that seek to open branches in Canada. Supporting inter-company transfers is an important instrument for further diversification of the Ukrainian economy and facilitating the transfer of key personnel and management where they are vital to the successful expansion of businesses and job-creation in Canada.

*The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to explore opportunities within the framework of the modernization of the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement to allow inter-company transfers for Ukrainian businesses seeking to open branches in Canada and create the possibility to transfer professionals and critical employees to run these businesses in Canada.*

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