

Executive Summary: Ukrainian Newcomer Survey 2025

The Ukrainian Newcomer Survey 2025, conducted by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) between May and July 2025, gathered insights from over 4,200 Ukrainian newcomers who arrived in Canada within the past ten years, including those who fled after February 2022. It is the first survey of its kind and provides us with comprehensive insight into the population of Ukrainian newcomers who have settled in Canada since 2015. The survey explored identity, settlement, culture, and community involvement, and the detailed analysis conducted by the Metropolis Institute, a division of the Association of Canadian Studies (ACS) that provides several recommendations for the future aimed at strengthening programs and supports for Ukrainian newcomers.

When the war began in 2022, many Ukrainians who arrived in Canada believed their stay would be temporary and they would return home quickly once the war ended. Even today – more than 3 years later – over half of the Ukrainians surveyed report a *very strong* connection to Ukraine, which is higher among women and those over 40 years of age. Interestingly, men were more likely to report a *weak* or *no connection*. Older cohorts also exhibited a thirst for keeping apprised of Ukraine-related news far more frequently than younger cohorts.

Similarly, over half of the Ukrainian women surveyed felt a *very strong connection* to their local Ukrainian Canadian community versus only one third of men feeling the same level of connection. The connection was even stronger for younger adults aged 18 to 23 who noted *very close* connections to their new community in Canada – demonstrating a positive integration.

The survey revealed that *holidays, ancestry, language, community participation, and respect for history* were seen as core to Ukrainian identity with female and older respondents placing stronger emphasis on these ‘requirements.’ It is no surprise that survey respondents identified their most important values to be *respect, responsibility, hard work, honesty, and freedom*. Perhaps not surprising that younger respondents were less likely to emphasize *hard work* and *honesty*.

Ukrainian nationals experienced many settlement challenges, but the most significant challenge noted by respondents was accessing *employment services*, followed by *housing supports*. Like many newcomers, language fluency was also an issue for Ukrainian nationals, with nearly half reporting language barriers as a challenge to integration but more prevalent in older cohorts (56 years and older).

The true test of settlement and integration services is the desire for newcomers to return to their home country. A striking 61% of survey respondents indicated they are not considering returning to Ukraine but 20% of older respondents (those aged 56 years and older) were. Younger adults cited *family/emotional ties* as reasons to consider a return. Wanting to *regain family connections, the high cost of living in Canada* and *no access to permanent residency* were the top reasons cited for those who were considering (or were unsure about) returning to Ukraine.

Developing educational and community connections also helps to strengthen settlement for newcomer populations. Just over 10% of adult Ukrainians attended a Ukrainian school in Canada while 34% of their children attended Ukrainian schools. Participation in Ukrainian cultural or educational programs was higher among women (with twice as many women as men doing so). Higher participation was also exhibited by younger adults aged 18 to 23 years and those residing in Quebec. Respondents prioritized programs for children/youth and support for new arrivals as most important for community development, with over 75% interested in strengthening ties with local Ukrainian Canadian communities. Finally, respondents identified celebrating Ukrainian holidays and preserving traditions as the experiences most important to them.

Community involvement and volunteerism are also used to determine attachment to a new country. The survey demonstrated that women (70%) are much more involved as well as actively participating in Ukrainian Canadian organizations as compared to men (56%). Moreover, participation was higher for those aged over 40 years. For those who did not participate in any Ukrainian-related organizations or activities, most respondents overwhelmingly cited *lack of time* as the main reason, with a *lack of interest* as another significant reason for those aged 18 to 23 years.

Respondents saw volunteering through their *educational* or *professional skills* as the best way of contributing to their communities. Among provinces, the volunteerism rate was the highest (over 52%) in British Columbia. Support in terms of language courses for middle-aged and older respondents (those aged 40 years and older) and flexible schedules and practical skills training for younger adults (aged 18 to 23) were identified as being the most helpful for volunteers. Organizations having a cause that Ukrainians care about and having an impact on the community were the most important factors in their decision to donate their time and effort.

Comparing these survey results of Ukrainian newcomers to Canadian immigrants (*using data from the latest available Social Identity cycle of the General Social Survey 2020*) in general is important and telling. The most striking finding perhaps is that 55.5% of Ukrainian newcomers reported having a strong connection to Ukraine versus 38.2% of Canadian immigrants overall. In 2020, 34.9% of Canadian immigrants reported a very strong sense of belonging to people with the same ethnic or cultural background while this 2025 survey reports only 11.8% Ukrainian respondents reporting a very close connection to their local Ukrainian Canadian community. Finally, when comparing volunteer participation, Ukrainian newcomers report that 41.8% of them volunteer to Ukrainian Canadian organizations or charitable initiatives in the past five years, while only 37% of Canadian immigrants reported having volunteered in an organization in the past five years. These data comparisons exhibit unique findings from this Ukrainian cohort distinguishing them from other cohorts from other countries. The immigration pathway for Ukrainians since 2022 is novel and unique and their pathway to permanence is fragile which may account for some of these outcomes, to date.

How Ukrainian newcomers see their community 10 years into the future was also canvassed by the survey and the results are important. Respondents envision a strong, united, supportive

community that preserves language, culture, and traditions while helping newcomers adapt. They expressed a desire for greater influence in Canadian society, politics, and economy, while expressing continued hope for maintaining resilience and cultural pride, even in the midst of ongoing conflict in their native land.

The UCC survey is an important start but more research and analysis will help to shed further light on what drives Ukrainian nationals to settle and ultimately integrate into Canadian society.

The following list of recommendations is not comprehensive but will advance the work that is necessary:

- Continue refining demographic weighting to better align with Census benchmarks.
- Conduct mixed-method approaches (surveys + focus groups) to capture nuanced experiences.
- Develop targeted outreach for men and younger adults to strengthen community ties.
- Expand youth-focused programming to address weaker connections to identity and lower engagement with Ukrainian news.
- Prioritize accessible employment and housing support programs.
- Invest in language training tailored to older newcomers.
- Explore advocacy on pathways to permanent residency to address uncertainty for temporary arrivals.
- Increase investment in Ukrainian schools, Saturday programs, and cultural activities, particularly for children and youth.
- Support intergenerational cultural programs to bridge gaps in identity between older and younger newcomers.
- Create flexible volunteer opportunities for students and working-age adults.
- Offer skill-building workshops and leadership training to empower youth volunteers.
- Strengthen outreach to men, highlighting practical, skill-based volunteering.
- Encourage donation campaigns tied to clear, impactful causes.
- Benchmark against broader immigrant integration trends to highlight strengths (volunteerism) and gaps (local belonging).
- Share findings with policymakers to advocate for resources comparable to other immigrant groups.
- Develop long-term strategies to sustain Ukrainian identity and unity while promoting civic and political engagement in Canada.
- Expand leadership pipelines for Ukrainian youth to ensure the next generation preserves cultural heritage and has a voice in Canadian society.