



# Ukrainian Newcomers in Waterloo Region

A Snapshot from the 2023 Immigrant Survey



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Waterloo Region is a hub of diversity, with people from many cultures and backgrounds calling the area home. Since its early beginning, it has provided refuge to people fleeing war. Most recently, this community has become home to many Ukrainians seeking safety and belonging.

This snapshot explores the responses of Ukrainian newcomers living in Waterloo Region to the 2023 Waterloo Region Immigrant Survey.<sup>1</sup> Most of these Ukrainians (190 respondents) arrived through the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) program. This program was open from March 22, 2022 until March 31, 2024, and provided Ukrainians fleeing war a temporary 3-year visa to reside in Canada. This snapshot highlights few general insights and presents the findings in a table format. The snapshot highlights where the experiences of Ukrainian survey respondents with a CUAET visa differed from the overall survey sample of almost 1,700 immigrants.

The Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership prepared this snapshot as a tool to help governments, funders, business leaders and non-profit organizations understand the experiences of this unique group of newcomers and develop and invest in policies and programs that respond to their needs.

### Key Insights about Ukrainian respondents with CUAET Visas

- 60% of Ukrainian CUAET respondents were living in Kitchener, 24% were in Waterloo, with the remainder living in Cambridge, rural townships or nearby communities.
- Nearly half spoke English well or very well, and a quarter spoke English poorly or not at all.
- Ukrainians with CUAET visas were more likely than all immigrant survey respondents to use English or French language learning services, and less likely to use housing services, police, recreation, small business supports, local municipal, legal, health or mental health services. They were similarly likely to have used settlement, education or childcare services.
- They were more likely to rate childcare, mental health and small business supports positively, and less likely to rate English language learning services positively.
- Of those that needed interpretation when they went to a health provider in the past year, 41% had interpretation provided, 41% did not have interpretation provided, and 24% brought a family member because they preferred that option<sup>2</sup>. In total, half of those who needed interpretation brought family or friends along to interpret - roughly divided between those that brought them because they preferred that option and those that brought them because interpretation wasn't otherwise available. This breakdown is similar to the experiences of all survey respondents.

<sup>1</sup> Percentages in red in the table below are based on a smaller number of individual respondents (less than 25) and should be interpreted with caution. Percentages based on fewer than 5 individuals were suppressed to protect participants' privacy. See the last page of this snapshot for more information about the 2023 Immigrant Survey.

<sup>2</sup> Respondents were able to select more than one option for the question about interpretation, so percentages add up to more than 100%.

- ↳ Ukrainians with a CUAET visa were more likely than all survey respondents to say Waterloo Region was quite welcoming, and slightly less likely to have felt relatively isolated in the past year. They were similarly likely to have a strong sense of belonging but more likely to not feel at home here.
- ↳ They were slightly more likely to feel safe in Waterloo Region - with 7 out of 10 feeling very or extremely safe.
- ↳ Ukrainians with a CUAET visa were less likely to experience discrimination than all survey respondents. For those that did, it was most likely due to language ability or immigration status - and most often when they were applying for a job, at their job, or when looking for housing.
- ↳ Ukrainian survey participants with a CUAET visa were slightly more likely to have had a positive settling experience (with 8 out of 10 saying it was good or excellent).
- ↳ Their top challenges were finding work, cost of living, and finding affordable housing, roughly the same as all survey respondents.
- ↳ Their top recommendations for change were more affordable housing, better programs for immigrants to find work, and a central place for both employers to find immigrant workers and for workers to find employment.
- ↳ One third of Ukrainians with CUAET visas came to Waterloo Region because they had family or friends here, and one third came for a job.
- ↳ Seven out of 10 Ukrainian survey respondents with CUAET visas said they might or definitely planned to stay in Waterloo Region.
- ↳ They were more likely to have a bachelor's degree compared to all survey respondents.
- ↳ Two-thirds of Ukrainian CUAET visa respondents identified as a woman, one-third as a man.
- ↳ Half were a member of a faith community.
- ↳ Seven out of 10 were employed - either full time, part-time or self-employed. Half of those that were employed were in a job that was at the same level as their skills or experience.
- ↳ Slightly more than 7 out of 10 said their income was not sufficient for the needs of them and their family.
- ↳ Nearly 6 out of 10 Ukrainians with CUAET visas were in housing that was affordable/suitable, and 4 out of 10 were in unaffordable and/or unsuitable housing.

## Data Table

The data below explores the responses of the Ukrainian survey respondents who came to Canada with a CUAET visa, compared to other groups of Immigrant Survey respondents. Percentages in red are based on smaller numbers of respondents (less than 25) and should be interpreted with caution. Data is not presented where there were fewer than five respondents to protect privacy. Darker green cells have higher values to more easily see differences.

	All respondents	Recent immigrants (in Canada 5 years or less)	Ukrainians (in Canada 5 years or less)	CUAET Ukrainians	Ukrainians (non-CUAET)
Number of survey respondents	1,676	1,112	231	190	76
<b>Immigration category</b>					
Immigrated as economic-category immigrants	23%	15%	6%	**	43%
Immigrated as family-category immigrants	16%	11%	3%	**	20%
Immigrated as GAR refugees	7%	5%	**	**	**
Immigrated as PSR refugees	4%	4%	**	**	**
Immigrated as previous refugee claimants	7%	5%	**	**	**
Current refugee claimants	3%	4%	**	**	**
Current international students	20%	29%	3%	**	13%
Current temporary work permits	5%	7%	4%	**	13%
Currently on CUAET visas	11%	17%	82%	100%	**
Other responses, "Unknown" or "I prefer not to answer"	3%	2%	**	**	**
<b>Time in Canada</b>					
Less than 1 year ago	31%	47%	66%	75%	12%
1 to 5 years ago	35%	53%	34%	25%	42%
6 to 10 years ago	12%	**	**	**	14%
10+ years ago	21%	**	**	**	32%
<b>Geography</b>					
Lived in Cambridge	12%	10%	**	**	**
Lived in Kitchener	51%	52%	58%	60%	59%
Lived in Waterloo	30%	33%	28%	24%	32%

	All respondents	Recent immigrants (in Canada 5 years or less)	Ukrainians (in Canada 5 years or less)	CUAET Ukrainians	Ukrainians (non- CUAET)
Lived in rural townships in Waterloo Region	3%	2%	**	**	**
Lived outside of Waterloo Region	4%	3%	**	**	**
<b>First language</b>					
English first language	14%	15%	**	**	**
Ukrainian first language (Includes those that indicated Ukrainian first language and those that filled out the survey in Ukrainian)	16%	20%	95%	94%	100%
<b>Number of languages spoken</b>					
Spoke 1 language	9%	10%	**	**	**
Spoke 2 languages	44%	42%	13%	14%	**
Spoke 3 languages	32%	35%	69%	69%	59%
Spoke 4 languages	11%	11%	13%	11%	27%
Spoke 5 or more languages	3%	2%	**	**	**
<b>English ability</b>					
Spoke English Very well	55%	51%	23%	22%	50%
Spoke English Well	22%	22%	24%	24%	20%
Spoke English Fairly well	14%	16%	27%	25%	21%
Spoke English Poorly	8%	10%	24%	26%	9%
Spoke English not at all	**	1%	**	**	
<b>Services used &amp; ratings</b>					
Education services - accessed	78%	81%	76%	76%	75%
Education services - rated positively	86%	87%	85%	85%	86%
Employment and/or skills training services -accessed	72%	75%	75%	77%	63%
Employment and/or skills training services - rated positively	67%	63%	65%	63%	74%
English language learning services - accessed	66%	71%	83%	85%	61%
English language learning services - rated positively	75%	73%	65%	65%	70%
French language learning services - accessed	40%	41%	54%	55%	48%

	All respondents	Recent immigrants (in Canada 5 years or less)	Ukrainians (in Canada 5 years or less)	CUAET Ukrainians	Ukrainians (non- CUAET)
French language learning services - rated positively	60%	61%	69%	68%	74%
<b>Health</b> services - accessed	80%	76%	68%	68%	72%
Health services - rated positively	62%	62%	64%	61%	66%
<b>Housing</b> services - accessed	64%	66%	39%	38%	47%
Housing services - rated positively	47%	48%	56%	55%	<b>46%</b>
<b>Language interpretation/translation</b> services - accessed	59%	62%	69%	68%	64%
Language interpretation/translation services - rated positively	68%	69%	60%	61%	65%
<b>Legal/courts</b> services - accessed	37%	34%	21%	21%	<b>25%</b>
Legal/courts services - rated positively	70%	74%	79%	74%	<b>89%</b>
<b>Local municipal government/bylaw</b> services - accessed	54%	50%	37%	38%	45%
Local municipal government/bylaw services - rated positively	73%	76%	80%	81%	76%
<b>Mental health</b> services - accessed	51%	49%	40%	40%	40%
Mental health services - rated positively	67%	72%	78%	77%	<b>67%</b>
<b>Police services</b> - accessed	53%	50%	31%	28%	53%
Police services - rated positively	81%	84%	90%	88%	90%
<b>Settlement/immigrant</b> services - accessed	61%	66%	59%	61%	49%
Settlement/immigrant services - rated positively	78%	77%	80%	80%	76%
<b>Small business/entrepreneurial</b> supports - accessed	37%	36%	18%	17%	<b>27%</b>
Small business/entrepreneurial supports - rated positively	67%	69%	78%	<b>77%</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Transportation</b> services - accessed	85%	90%	89%	90%	84%
Transportation services - rated positively	71%	73%	61%	60%	61%
<b>Recreation</b> services - accessed	76%	75%	56%	53%	73%
Recreation services - rated positively	79%	80%	84%	85%	85%
<b>Childcare</b> services - accessed	44%	44%	42%	40%	49%
Childcare services - rated positively	68%	73%	78%	81%	<b>59%</b>

	All respondents	Recent immigrants (in Canada 5 years or less)	Ukrainians (in Canada 5 years or less)	CUAET Ukrainians	Ukrainians (non-CUAET)
<b>Interpretation</b>					
Had interpretation provided when they went to a health provider in the past year (of those that needed interpretation in health settings)	38%	40%	40%	41%	**
Wanted language interpretation but did not receive it when they went to a health provider in the past year (of those that needed interpretation in health settings)	15%	15%	13%	14%	**
Brought a family member or friend because interpretation was not available when they went to a health provider in the past year (of those that needed interpretation in health settings)	29%	30%	30%	27%	50%
Brought a family member or friend because they prefer this instead of a professional interpreter when they went to a health provider in the past year (of those that needed interpretation in health settings)	25%	21%	23%	24%	**
Did not need interpretation when they went to a health provider in the past year	57%	49%	54%	49%	78%
Did not get to a hospital, doctor or health provider in the past year	22%	26%	14%	16%	8%
<b>Life satisfaction</b>					
Quite satisfied with their life as a whole (rated 8-10 on a 0-10 point scale)	42%	38%	38%	36%	45%
Somewhat satisfied with their life as a whole (rated 5-7 on a 0-10 point scale)	44%	46%	49%	49%	50%
Dissatisfied with their life as a whole (rated 0-4 on a 0-10 point scale)	14%	16%	13%	15%	**

	All respondents	Recent immigrants (in Canada 5 years or less)	Ukrainians (in Canada 5 years or less)	CUAET Ukrainians	Ukrainians (non-CUAET)
<b>Community welcoming</b>					
Felt Waterloo Region was quite welcoming to immigrants	56%	58%	80%	80%	68%
Felt Waterloo Region was somewhat welcoming to immigrants	34%	32%	15%	14%	25%
Felt Waterloo Region was unwelcoming to immigrants	10%	10%	5%	6%	7%
<b>Sense of belonging</b>					
Had a strong (very or somewhat strong) sense of belonging in Waterloo Region	72%	70%	69%	69%	73%
<b>Isolation</b>					
Felt relatively isolated (a great deal or quite a bit isolated) in the past year	26%	29%	17%	19%	8%
<b>Safety</b>					
Felt relatively safe (extremely or very safe) in Waterloo Region	66%	71%	72%	71%	49%
<b>Discrimination</b>					
Experienced discrimination in the past year	24%	22%	10%	10%	17%
Most common reason, for those that experienced discrimination	48% - Race or skin color	47% - Race or skin color	46% - Language ability	47% - Language ability	47% - Accent
Second most common reason, for those that experienced discrimination	36% - Ethnicity or culture	34% - Ethnicity or culture	35% - Immigration status	40% - Immigration status	**
Third most common reason, for those that experienced discrimination	31% - Accent	31% - Language ability	19% - Ethnicity or culture	**	**



	All respondents	Recent immigrants (in Canada 5 years or less)	Ukrainians (in Canada 5 years or less)	CUAET Ukrainians	Ukrainians (non-CUAET)
Most common situation where discrimination occurred	31% - At my job – for example from supervisors, co-workers or clients	31% - When applying for a job or a promotion	28% - When applying for a job or a promotion	28% - When applying for a job or a promotion	42% - At my job – for example from supervisors, co-workers or clients
Second most common situation where discrimination occurred	31% - When applying for a job or a promotion	28% - At my job – for example from supervisors, co-workers or clients	28% - At my job – for example from supervisors, co-workers or clients	28% - At my job – for example from supervisors, co-workers or clients	**
Third most common situation where discrimination occurred	30% - In a store, bank or restaurant	28% - In a store, bank or restaurant	21% - Other (please specify)	22% - When looking for housing	**
<b>Settlement experience</b>					
Had a positive experience (excellent or good) settling in Waterloo Region	74%	72%	78%	79%	70%
<b>Feeling at home</b>					
Felt at home within 5 years in Waterloo Region	74%	75%	63%	58%	79%
Noted that they still don't feel at home in Waterloo Region	20%	25%	37%	42%	**
<b>Top challenges</b>					
Most common top challenge	59% - Cost of living or money problems	60% - Cost of living or money problems	59% - Finding work	62% - Finding work	50% - Cost of living or money problems
Second most common top challenge	49% - Finding affordable housing	58% - Finding work	54% - Cost of living or money problems	56% - Cost of living or money problems	48% - Finding health care
Third most common top challenge	49% - Finding work	55% - Finding affordable housing	50% - Finding affordable housing	51% - Finding affordable housing	41% - Finding affordable housing

	All respondents	Recent immigrants (in Canada 5 years or less)	Ukrainians (in Canada 5 years or less)	CUAET Ukrainians	Ukrainians (non-CUAET)
<b>Top suggestions</b>					
Most common suggestion	68% - More affordable housing	70% - More affordable housing	75% - More affordable housing	73% - More affordable housing	88% - More affordable housing
Second most common suggestion	43% - Better programs for immigrants to find work	49% - Better programs for immigrants to find work	58% - Better programs for immigrants to find work	62% - Better programs for immigrants to find work	<b>33% - Better programs for immigrants to find work</b>
Third most common suggestion	23% - More opportunities to help improve English skills	22% - Educate employers on the value and ways of hiring, retaining and promoting immigrants	<b>24% - One place to get all settlement, immigration and other services</b>	<b>26% - A central place for both employers to find immigrant workers and for workers to find employment</b>	<b>15% - One place to get all settlement, immigration and other services</b>
<b>Reasons for coming to Waterloo Region</b>					
Most common reason to come to Waterloo Region	33% - I had family or friends that live in Waterloo Region	39% - Post-secondary institutions	39% - I had family or friends that live in Waterloo Region	<b>35% - I had family or friends that live in Waterloo Region</b>	<b>39% - For a job</b>
Second most common reason to come to Waterloo Region	32% - Post-secondary institutions	33% - I had family or friends that live in Waterloo Region	<b>31% - For a job</b>	<b>34% - For a job</b>	<b>36% - I had family or friends that live in Waterloo Region</b>
Third most common reason to come to Waterloo Region	24% - For a job	22% - For a job	<b>15% - Waterloo Region was more affordable than other communities</b>	<b>17% - Waterloo Region was more affordable than other communities</b>	<b>30% - Post-secondary institutions</b>

	All respondents	Recent immigrants (in Canada 5 years or less)	Ukrainians (in Canada 5 years or less)	CUAET Ukrainians	Ukrainians (non-CUAET)
<b>Intention to stay</b>					
Possibly staying permanently in Waterloo Region (might stay or definitely staying)	62%	59%	67%	69%	68%
Not sure if they were staying permanently in Waterloo Region	32%	34%	26%	25%	25%
Not planning on staying permanently in Waterloo Region	6%	7%	7%	6%	7%
<b>Age</b>					
Youth (age 16-24 years)	14%	18%	12%	11%	**
<b>Race/population group</b>					
Racialized	76%	79%	**	**	**
Most common racial group	28% - South Asian - e.g. East Indian Pakistani, Sri Lankan	30% - 'South Asian - e.g. East Indian Pakistani, Sri Lankan	90% - White	89% - White	100% - White
Second most common racial group	19% - White	20% - Black - e.g. Black-Caribbean, Black-African, Black-North American	11% - Other (please specify)	13% - Other (please specify)	**
Third most common racial group	19% - Black - e.g. Black-Caribbean, Black-African, Black-North American	16% - White	**	**	**
<b>Education</b>					
Had a Bachelors or above	75%	77%	91%	89%	88%

	All respondents	Recent immigrants (in Canada 5 years or less)	Ukrainians (in Canada 5 years or less)	CUAET Ukrainians	Ukrainians (non- CUAET)
<b>Gender Identity &amp; Sexual Orientation</b>					
Woman	59%	58%	68%	70%	55%
Man	40%	42%	32%	30%	45%
Non-binary, and prefer to self-describe	1%	**	**	**	**
Identified as LGBTQ+	3%	2%	**	**	**
<b>Disability</b>					
Living with a disability or chronic disease	6%	3%	**	**	**
<b>Faith community</b>					
Member of a faith community	76%	77%	49%	52%	55%
<b>Employment</b>					
Employed (including full-time, part-time & self-employed)	66%	59%	74%	70%	93%
In a job that is commensurate with their skills and experience (of those who were working)	51%	44%	52%	51%	70%
<b>Income</b>					
Income not sufficient for their needs (either somewhat or definitely not enough)	67%	73%	70%	71%	67%
Income definitely not sufficient for their needs	27%	31%	27%	32%	**
<b>Housing</b>					
Their housing was not affordable/suitable	42%	47%	39%	41%	34%

Percentages above are of all those that answered each question.

## Data Sources and Limitations

The data for this snapshot comes from the Immigration Partnership's 2023 Immigrant Survey. This biannual, multilingual survey is for immigrants who live, work and/or study in Waterloo Region. It covers immigrant experiences on a range of topics impacting their ability to reach their full potential and contribute to a thriving, prosperous community for everyone. The survey was most recently conducted in June 2023 with 1,676 participants.

In 2023, the majority of participants filled out the survey online. Participants reflected the whole range of immigrants living in Waterloo Region. Two thirds (67%) had been in Canada for 5 years or less, while the rest had been here for longer. More than half were permanently in Canada (57%) and 39% were here on a temporary permit. Almost all (93%) were living in Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo, with 3% in the rural townships. Participants answered the survey in 11 languages and had 75 first languages. English was the first language of 14% of participants, 77% spoke English well or very well and 9% spoke English poorly or not at all. A full 76% of respondents identified as racialized; 59% were female and 40% male; 3% identified as LGBTQ+; 6% were living with a disability or chronic illness. Respondents, like immigrants overall, were highly educated: 75% had a bachelor's degree or above. Almost two thirds (63%) were working (full/part time/casual/self-employed) and 26% were unemployed and looking for work.

Survey responses were disaggregated along many demographic lines and analysed to uncover the varying experiences of different groups of immigrants. This profile highlights larger differences Ukrainian newcomers with temporary CUAET visas. Because of the small numbers for some subgroups, the findings should be interpreted with caution. Additional information can be found at [www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/immigrantsurvey](http://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/immigrantsurvey).

The Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership is collaboration of over 100 community service, business, municipal, post-secondary and ethno-cultural organizations, and residents working together to create the conditions for immigrants to succeed and help build a welcoming, dynamic community.

### For more information contact:

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