



Background on Ukrainians Fleeing to the United States

May 2022



More than 6 million people have fled Ukraine as a result of the recent Russian invasion. While the significant majority will remain in Europe if they cannot return home, the Biden administration will welcome 100,000 Ukrainians through a variety of legal immigration pathways.

This briefing document provides companies with initial information about the U.S. government's plans to welcome Ukrainians into the U.S. and highlights how businesses can play a critical role in helping to economically integrate Ukrainians in the coming months and years. All people fleeing Ukraine will be eligible to work legally in the US. Companies will not need to sponsor their work authorization documents as they will receive those directly from the U.S. government.

Expected Locations of Refugees from Ukraine in the U.S.

While there is not yet official data on the locations where Ukrainians will live in the U.S., new Ukrainian arrivals will likely resettle in communities with large existing Ukrainian populations. There are sizable Ukrainian communities in 30 states across the country.



Expected Legal Statuses of Displaced Ukrainians

There are four main legal immigration pathways through which Ukrainians will resettle in the U.S.:

Humanitarian Parolees

The U.S. government announced a new humanitarian parole program, *Uniting for Ukraine*, on April 21, 2022, to streamline the process for Ukrainian citizens who have been displaced by the war to apply for humanitarian parole in the U.S. To be eligible, Ukrainians must have been residents in Ukraine as of February 11, 2022, have a sponsor in the United States, complete vaccinations and other public health requirements, and pass rigorous biometric and biographic screening and security checks. Ukrainians approved via this process will be authorized to travel to the United States and be considered for parole on a case-by-case basis for a period of up to two years. **Ukrainian parolees are eligible to work legally in the US and can apply for their work authorization documents from the U.S. government after receiving parole.** However, parole is not a long-term legal status and they will need to apply for another status after two years. **The US government expects that the majority of Ukrainians coming to the US will come through parole.**

Asylum Seekers

An asylum seeker is an individual who has left their country of origin and has formally applied for asylum in another country but is waiting for a legal determination on their asylum case. Approximately 10,000 Ukrainians have flown to Mexico and applied for asylum at the U.S. Southern border. If an asylum seeker wins their asylum case in the U.S., they become an "asylee" and they obtain long term legal status in the U.S. similar to refugee status. **Asylum seekers are eligible to work legally in the US and can apply for their work authorization documents from the U.S. government 150 days after filing their asylum application.**

Refugees

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee their home country due to a well-founded fear of persecution. The U.S. has resettled Ukrainian refugees for many years due to ongoing conflict in the country. Most Ukrainian refugees in the U.S. have arrived through the Lautenberg program, which helps religious minorities from the former Soviet Union resettle in the U.S. The Department of State announced on April 21, 2022 that it will expand the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program's operations in Europe to provide eligible Ukrainians with greater access to refugee resettlement processing under the Lautenberg program, while also expanding referral mechanisms for Ukrainians and others fleeing Russia's war in Ukraine who are in need of permanent resettlement (e.g. LGBTQ Ukrainians, people with disabilities). **Refugees are eligible to work legally in the US and receive their work authorization documents upon arrival in the US.**

Note that the refugee resettlement process can take a year or more to complete.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Holders

Ukrainians (and individuals without nationality who last resided in Ukraine) who resided or arrived in the U.S. before April 11, 2022 are eligible for Temporary Protected Status, which allows them to live and work in the U.S. for up to 18 months and apply for employment authorization, so long as they meet eligibility requirements. Note that TPS is not a long-term legal status. The U.S. government estimates that approximately 60,000 Ukrainians are eligible for Temporary Protected Status. **TPS holders are eligible to work legally in the US and need to apply for their work authorization documents from the U.S. government after receiving TPS.**

Expected Work Authorization Status of Ukrainians

All people fleeing Ukraine will be eligible to work legally in the US. Companies will not need to sponsor their work authorization documents as they will receive those directly from the U.S. government. That said, only those individuals conferred legal “refugee” status will be eligible to receive a comprehensive suite of U.S. government-funded benefits that are delivered through the services of the U.S’ nine national refugee resettlement agencies. More information about the process for hiring displaced people in the United States can be found through Tent and LIRS’ [U.S. Employer’s Guide to Hiring Refugees](#).

Since most Ukrainian men have been prohibited from leaving the country, the Ukrainian refugee population overwhelmingly consists of women, children, the elderly, and the disabled. In terms of their skill sets, many refugees from Ukraine have extensive professional backgrounds in a variety of industries (e.g. tech, hospitality, manufacturing, etc.) and approximately 60% of Ukrainian women have a Bachelor’s degree or higher. They will have a range of English language proficiency.

If you’re interested in hiring Ukrainians, or other refugees, here are a few key steps for setting up an effective refugee hiring program:

1. Join the Tent Partnership for Refugees for access to tailored guidance and resources
2. Identify a lead for your refugee hiring program
3. Align with Tent on locations to pilot your refugee hiring efforts and the type of roles that refugees could fill
4. Ask Tent to connect you with local organizations that can help you recruit refugee talent
5. Work with Tent to educate your HR teams on best practices for refugee hiring and integration using our trainings & guidebooks

About the Tent Partnership for Refugees

With more and more refugees displaced for longer periods of time, businesses have a critical role to play in helping refugees integrate economically in their new host communities. The Tent Partnership for Refugees mobilizes the global business community to improve the lives and livelihoods of more than 30 million refugees who have been forcibly displaced from their home countries. Founded by Chobani’s founder and CEO Hamdi Ulukaya in 2016, we are a network of over 220 major companies committed to including refugees. Tent believes that companies can most sustainably support refugees by leveraging their core business operations -by engaging refugees as potential employees, entrepreneurs, and consumers.

The full list of Tent members can be found [here](#). Find out more at www.tent.org.