



How Companies in Canada Can Address Transportation Barriers for Refugee Employees

While hiring refugees brings many business benefits, there are distinct transportation challenges refugee employees face once hired. These include a lack of understanding of how to navigate public transportation options and not having a driver's licence and/or car. In fact, these barriers can discourage refugees from even applying for jobs in the first place. Companies can address these challenges and reap the full benefits of a dynamic and diverse workforce by making modest investments and/or small changes to their operations to help refugee employees commute to and from work.

Best practices for addressing transportation barriers

To help refugee employees access your company's locations via public transportation:

01 FOCUS HIRING EFFORTS IN COMMUTER-FRIENDLY LOCATIONS

- Consider hiring in locations that are accessible via public transportation as your company determines where to focus its refugee hiring efforts. Consider whether your site is accessible by verifying that the closest train station, bus stop, or other public transportation hub is nearby. Knowing that a significant number of non-refugee employees at your company already use public transportation to commute can indicate how accessible each location is.

02 OFFER RESOURCES TO HELP EMPLOYEES NAVIGATE THE AREA

- Share guidance with refugee employees about navigating the public transportation system, along with detailed maps and directions. Consider translating these materials into a refugee employee's native language and provide them with a multilingual point of contact who can answer any additional questions.
- Educate refugee employees about accessing public transportation benefits (e.g., discounted monthly travel cards) and any other commuter benefits offered by your company.



Exercise patience and understanding when it comes to punctuality-related issues during the first weeks of a refugee starting a role as they adjust to their new commute.

To help refugee employees access your company's locations via private transportation:

01 SPONSOR A SHUTTLE FOR EMPLOYEES

- Contract third-party providers to arrange shuttles that pick up and drop off groups of refugee employees working the same shifts, either at their homes or a central location (e.g., a shopping centre). Many employees could benefit from a shuttle service.

02 ORGANISE A CAR SHARING PROGRAMME

- Arrange car sharing programmes so that participants split relevant costs (e.g., fuel, parking) and/or driving duties. Car share scheduling can be coordinated through internal company websites, apps, and/or informal meetings/sign-ups at work.

- Encourage car sharing by giving parking preference to car sharers, subsidising fuel and parking fees, and/or helping a group of employees to rent a car.

03 CONTRACT RIDE-HAILING SERVICES

- Contract ride-hailing companies to set up a commuting programme for refugee employees through services such as Uber for Business. *Tent can connect companies to its members, such as Uber, to discuss this opportunity in further detail – reach out at info@tent.org.*
- Decide what share of the cost will be covered by your company, what days and times employees can request a ride, and which vehicle type employees can select.

04 ENCOURAGE EMPLOYEES TO GET A DRIVER'S LICENCE

- Subsidise third-party driving lessons for refugee employees or arrange them during work hours.
- Incentivize getting a driver's licence by offering a one-time payment to reward refugee employees who obtain one within a specified period of time.

05 OFFER GUIDANCE ON HOW TO SECURE A PERSONAL VEHICLE

- Partner with financial institutions or car dealerships to share practical information with refugee employees about how to lease, rent, or buy a car.
- When pointing refugees to resources, be mindful that they will likely have limited knowledge of the financial system in their new country and may require more guidance.



Grant refugee employees greater flexibility to work remotely, if their role permits.



Providing these benefits is only needed temporarily while refugee employees adjust to their new environment. The investment can yield long-term benefits for your company's recruitment and integration efforts.

Next Steps:

The Tent Partnership for Refugees can work with companies to help them address specific transportation barriers for their workforce. To learn more about Tent and its services, reach out at info@tent.org.

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 to integrate economically in their new communities. Tent was launched in 2016 by Hamdi Ulukaya, the CEO and founder of Chobani – a multibillion dollar food company in the U.S. – to mobilise global businesses to fill this gap by helping connect refugees to work. Today, we are a [network of over 300 major companies](https://www.tent.org) committed to hiring, training, and mentoring refugees. Find out more at www.tent.org.