



Factsheet:

Supporting those fleeing Ukraine as they arrive in Canada

March 2022

We all have a personal connection to the idea of belonging. Strengthening our sense of belonging is at the heart of building more resilient communities. In several places around the world, including Ukraine, both community and belonging are collapsing — people fear for their futures. In our work, we are committed to creating communities where everyone belongs — to leave no one behind. As Ukrainians arrive in Canada, community foundations can play a role in supporting them and ensuring they feel welcome in our communities.

Community foundations' core business centres around providing grants, building funds and demonstrating community leadership, all in support of building strong, healthy and vibrant communities. In this factsheet, we'll explore how these roles can be utilized in welcoming newcomers into our community.

Getting Started

Before determining what role your community foundation can take, it's important to deepen your understanding of who is doing what in your community. We encourage you to connect with and support the local Ukrainian community, including any Ukrainian-specific churches or organizations like the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. We also encourage you to meet with the local chapter of the Red Cross and representatives of newcomer service agencies.

Understanding what's available and needed will help your foundation determine where you can have a positive impact.

Providing Grants

Local newcomer organizations, churches and social service organizations are mobilizing their resources and programs providing assistance in supplying housing, food and other necessities of life. Community foundations could consider allocating a portion of their community granting dollars specifically to help these organizations. The foundation's existing grant criteria may not



apply to providing emergency support, so foundations may want to consider creating a new grant stream providing one-time support.

If you are not aware of agencies providing newcomer services in your community, the Government of Canada has a great resource where you can search by postal code to find who is providing free newcomer services near you. Click [here](#) to find out contact information for local organizations. Connect with them to let them know how they can access grants from your foundation to assist in their work.

Some communities, with residents of Ukrainian heritage, are home to chapters of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC), which is a charitable organization. Click [here](#) to see if there is a chapter in your community. Local chapters are mobilizing their members in preparation for an influx of people fleeing Ukraine and having access to one-time support through grants would be helpful to defray costs incurred.

Other Ukrainian organizations that may have chapters in your community include:

[Ukrainian Canadian Social Services](#)

[Ukrainian Youth Association](#)

[League of Ukrainian Canadians](#)

During the Syrian refugee crisis, local churches mobilized their members in helping to welcome and settle refugees. Across Canada, there is a network of Ukrainian Catholic Churches. Check to see if there is a congregation in your community and let them know of grants available to help. And if you are aware that congregations of other faiths are mobilizing their members to welcome Ukrainian newcomers, let them know what type of assistance they may be able to access from your foundation.

Donor-advised funds (DAF)

Connect with the advisors to your donor-advised funds to let them know what your foundation is doing and invite them to allocate a portion of their annual distribution to the pool of dollars you have allocated to support grants to organizations supporting newcomers. One way to encourage or incentivize this concept is to offer to match, up to a specific dollar amount, any of the DAF allocations to your emergency relief granting program.

If you already have funds directed to support Ukrainian charities, consider doing an earlier or partial distribution to provide immediate financial support.



Building funds

When asked what role the community foundation could take in his community, a Canadian mayor, whose ancestry is Ukrainian, suggested the following:

Creating a specific fund for refugees from the war would also help direct some funds locally as people will be asking how to help families coming to our community. While the churches and immigration-specific agencies are also looking for funds - some people may see the community foundations as a neutral place to donate as a means to track where the funds are going - just a thought. It could also take the pressure off of the volunteers at the churches who are handling a significant amount of money right now.

This could be a model moving forward for other war-torn parts of the world as people look to safer places - and community foundations can have systems in place to access funds quickly to help with transitioning.

Promoting Donations

Should your foundation decide not to create a specific emergency relief fund, you may want to encourage your donors to make donations to community foundations abroad or international organizations providing relief and support to those fleeing from or still remaining in Ukraine, some of which include:

International Community Foundations

The Federation of Community Foundations in Poland and their network is working to support people fleeing Ukraine. They recently [launched an appeal](#) that will offer support for refugees, as well as on-the-spot assistance (medicine, food, shelter, etc). Note, this website is in Polish; you can use the [automatic google translate](#) option to review an English translation.

International Organizations

[Canadian Red Cross](#)

[Humanitarian Coalition](#), a coalition of 10 organizations

[UN Refugee Agency \(UNHCR\)](#)



Portfolio Review

Some community foundations have been looking at their investments and holdings and inquiring about portions that may be invested in Russia. Several have shared they are considering shifting their portfolio or have already done so. Recently, the Institute of Corporate Directors issued a [statement](#) specific to what is happening in Ukraine that speaks to the role of directors in reconsidering investments connected to Russia.

Community Leadership

Community foundations have a history of providing leadership in their communities, especially during emergencies, as a donor, a granter, a convenor and by providing community leadership. Community foundations can bring together organizations that have not worked together in the past but could come together to welcome Ukrainians. Community foundations could bring together newcomer and emergency relief agencies, churches and newcomer groups to share information on who is doing what, what resources are needed and available, and how to work together to ensure a coordinated effort to welcome Ukrainians to their community.

Meet with your board and volunteers to determine if there is interest in becoming more directly involved in welcoming Ukrainians, including:

- Hosting families
- Providing food, clothing, community connections, transportation and support
- If your community has an airport, be part of a group welcoming Ukrainians coming to your community

Centring Equity

Niigaan Sinclair, who is Anishinaabe and a columnist at the Winnipeg Free Press, posted on February 25 of this year, [Ukrainian people are my people too](#). He writes about the close relationship between Indigenous communities in Manitoba and Ukrainians settlers since the 1890s. This post is a reminder to community foundations to include diverse organizations in their consultations on welcoming those fleeing the war.

A recent NPR post was about [how refugees fleeing Ukraine face discrimination in countries with anti-gay laws](#). Canada is not such a country. Through your community leadership work, ensure that LGBTQ2+ groups are part of the conversation on how your community can support Ukrainians fleeing their country.



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To learn more about what the European Community Foundation Initiative is doing, click [here](#).

The latest updates on what the federal government is doing to support Ukrainians can be found [here](#).