

REFUGEES IN CANADA AND B.C.

What is a refugee?

A refugee is a person who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."

Source: "Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees", Office of United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

How many refugees are there?

In 2013 there were about **10 million** refugees in the world, and the UNHCR estimated that **960,000** were in need of resettlement.

What is Canada's role?

As a signatory to the United Nations Refugee Convention, Canada is pledged to accept a share of the world's refugees. In 2013, **24,000** refugees arrived in Canada.

How do refugees arrive?

There are two ways:

- Some are selected abroad to be resettled. These are called **Government Assisted Refugees (GARs)** or **Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs)**.
- Some arrive on their own and make a claim. These are called **Refugee Claimants**.
- Refugee claimants make up a little more than half of all Canadian refugees, but less than half of those to B.C.

The former can be **Government Assisted Refugees (GARs)** or **Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs)**. The latter are called **Refugee Claimants** and constituted a little more than half of all Canadian refugees, although less than half of those to B.C.

How many come to B.C.?

In 2012, CIC data indicates **1,438** "protected persons" arrived in B.C. This represents **3.5%** of the Canadian total and **4%** of total immigration to the province. *Source: CIC*

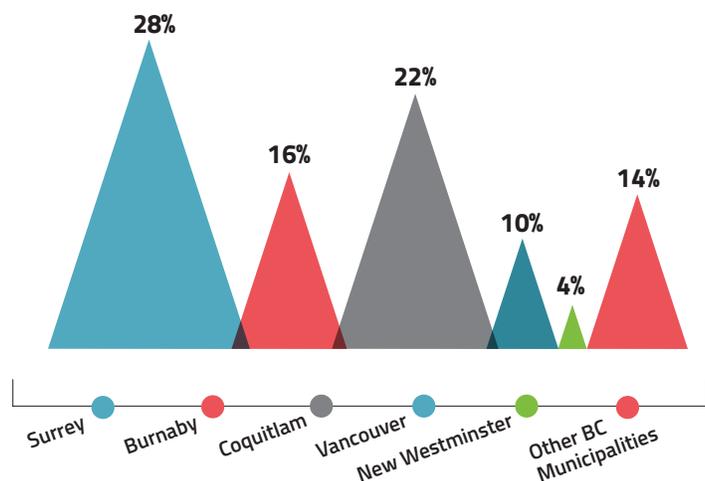


Where in B.C. do they settle?

Refugee claimants and privately sponsored refugees are not tracked, but six of nine B.C. sponsor groups for PSRs are based in Metro Vancouver. Precise data is available only for GARs. This suggests that Surrey, followed by the Tri-Cities and Burnaby, are B.C.'s largest refugee destinations. *Source: ISSofBC*

Government Assisted Refugees destined to B.C. by municipality, 2010 to 2013

Source: ISSofBC



Note: 6% are reported as Outside B.C.

REFUGEES IN SURREY

How many refugees arrive in Surrey?

Data is available only for **GARs**, which in B.C. represent about **40%** of refugee arrivals in a typical year. From 2010 to 2013 there were **701** such arrivals in Surrey, suggesting an estimated refugee total of **400** or more annually.

Where do refugees in Surrey arrive from?

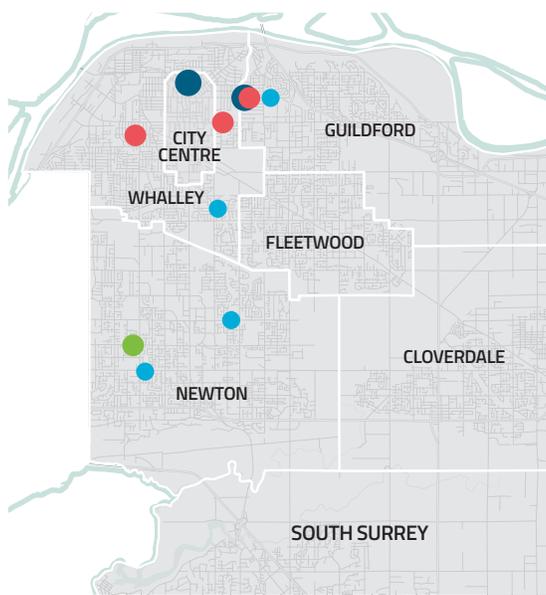
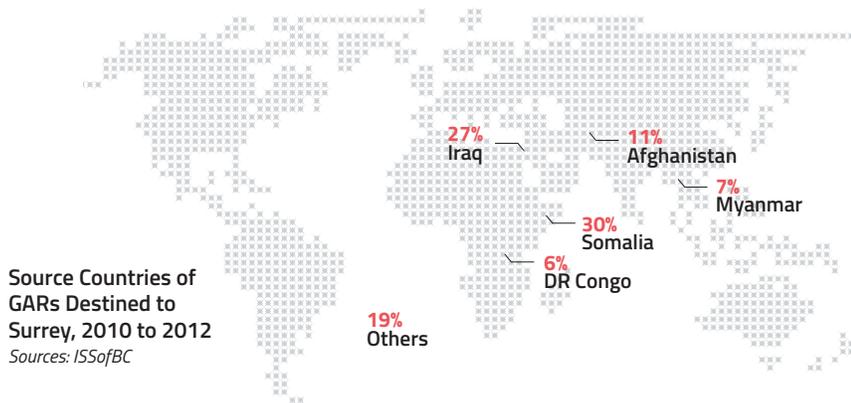
Between 2010 and 2012 the top five countries were Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Myanmar and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Source countries typically vary based on global strife. In recent years there has been an increase from countries such as Syria.

What are the issues faced by Surrey's refugees?

Whereas immigrants are selected based on their ability to succeed in Canada, sponsored refugees include high-needs individuals, with characteristics such as the following:

- Low literacy levels in their original languages
- Increased physical and mental health issues
- Larger households
- More households with single parents, mostly led by women
- Youth with limited exposure to formal education

In addition, refugees receive a transportation loan from the federal government to offset the cost of resettlement. As a result many refugee families arrive in Canada with almost **\$10,000** in debt. The debt constitutes a severe hardship, yet about **90%** successfully repay it. *Source: CIC*



What additional information is available?

Surrey offers a diversity of services and programs specifically designed for refugees. Check Surrey Settlement Services Map at www.SurreyLIP.ca

For a comprehensive overview of Surrey's refugee situation, download the document *Refugee Newcomers in Surrey: Changing Faces and Neighbourhoods* from www.surrey.ca/community/16060.aspx

The Surrey Local Immigration Partnership is currently undertaking research and consultation intended to reveal the needs, barriers and challenges faced by Surrey's refugee populations and identify solutions, actions and promising practices to enhance integration and inclusion.

See more at: www.SurreyLIP.ca

ABOUT THE SURREY LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP Established in 2014, Surrey LIP is led by the City of Surrey and governed by a committee drawn from 30 community organizations.