



Welcome and Information Guide for Ukrainians Arriving in Hamilton, ON

Prepared by:
Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC)
<https://hamiltonimmigration.ca/>
May 2022



Funded by:

Financé par :



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada



THE OFFICE OF
MAYOR FRED
EISENBERGER
CITY OF HAMILTON



Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to welcome you with open arms to the City of Hamilton. In coming to Hamilton, you are joining a community of diversity and inclusion.

Hamilton has a history of welcoming those displaced by war with a strong newcomer support network. Immigrants are a pillar of our community; many Ukrainian-Canadians have helped make our City what it is today and continue to share their vibrant culture, food, music, faith, and community services.

Until you can return safely, Hamilton is proud to provide a temporary home. In your welcome package you will find important information about the services and supports (like language classes and job search programs) that will help you settle in our welcoming city of Hamilton.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fred Eisenberger".

Fred Eisenberger
Mayor



Table of Contents

Welcome to Hamilton	4
Pathways to immigrate to Canada	5
Your first few days	5
<i>Register with Red Cross</i>	5
<i>Follow COVID-19 guidelines</i>	6
<i>Apply for Social Insurance Number (SIN)</i>	6
<i>Apply for public health insurance (OHIP)</i>	6
<i>Open a bank account</i>	6
<i>Connect with Ukrainian-Canadian Congress</i>	7
<i>Contact a local settlement service provider</i>	7
Housing	7
Income support	7
Settlement services	8
<i>Language instruction</i>	8
<i>Employment supports</i>	9
<i>Translation and interpretation</i>	9
Healthcare	10
Enrolling children in school	11
Finding childcare	12
Credentials assessment	13
Transportation	13
Ukrainian organizations and groups	14

Welcome to Hamilton

Welcome! The City of Hamilton is pleased to welcome and support you and your family as you start a new life in Canada.

Hamilton is a mid-size city in southern Ontario with a diverse population, including a strong Ukrainian community. We have a long history of welcoming displaced people from other parts of the world. A strong network of local service providers, ethnic associations, and faith communities are here to help you.

Our city is also home to world-class hospitals, highly ranked postsecondary institutions, and a vibrant economy.

Here are some facts about Hamilton:

- Population: 569,000
- 25% of Hamilton's population was born outside Canada.
- Over 18,000 Hamiltonians identify as Ukrainian.
- Hamilton has the most diversified economy in the country.
- As a regional hub for healthcare, Hamilton was named as the best Canadian city for hospitals in 2018.
- There are over 100 waterfalls in Hamilton and many parks, including on the waterfront.

As you start your new life in Hamilton, this document provides important information about what you need to know on your first few days as well as services and supports to help you.



Pathways to immigrate to Canada

Following the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Government of Canada announced special measures to bring Ukrainians to safety in Canada, including temporary and permanent pathways.

- Temporary Pathway: Ukrainians and their family members can travel to Canada through [the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel \(CUAET\)](#) program.
- Permanent Pathway: Ukrainians with family members in Canada can be sponsored to come to Canada permanently. For more information, click [here](#) or visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/ukraine-measures/bring-family.html>
- To learn more about the immigration measures for Ukrainians, visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/ukraine-measures.html>
- Dedicated Service Channel for Ukraine immigration enquiries:
 - Call **613-321-4243**, collect calls accepted.
 - Use the [IRCC crisis web form](#) and add the keyword “**Ukraine2022**”

Your first few days

Coming to a new country can be overwhelming, but here are some early things you can do to get started when you arrive in Canada:

Register with Red Cross

The Red Cross has set up reception centres at Canada’s ports of entry to provide reception, registration and translation/interpretation services. Health specialists and clinicians from Red Cross are on-site to assist you with referral to other service providers if you need medical attention or mental health counselling.

- For immediate emergency services and life-threatening situations, please call 911 from any phone (mobile, home or public phones).
- If you have any non-urgent medical questions or need to know where to find a clinic or hospital, call 1-866-797-0000.
- If you are experiencing stress, or would need to talk, there are on-site mental health specialists who can help. You can also access support by calling Red Cross team at the toll-free number 1-833-354-1628.

The Red Cross also provides welcome packages for you to learn more about supports and services available to you upon arrival. For more information, visit

<https://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/current-emergency-responses/conflict-in-ukraine>

Follow COVID-19 guidelines

COVID-19 continues to be a risk to the health of everyone in Canada. Public Health Ontario has created resources in several languages, including Ukrainian, about COVID-19 and ways to protect yourself from it: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/public-resources?tab=27>

Please remember that there are masking requirements in place in certain settings in Ontario. These requirements are rapidly changing, but you can keep up to date by visiting <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/public-health-measures#overview>

Hamilton has various clinics that offer COVID-19 vaccines. For locations, visit <https://www.hamilton.ca/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines>

Apply for Social Insurance Number (SIN)

You will need a SIN to work or access government programs and benefits. You must complete an application for your SIN, and the application requires some supporting documents. To check what documents you need and how to apply online, visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin/apply.html>

Alternatively, you can apply in-person at a Service Canada location. Find the address for your local Service Canada location at <https://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/tbsc-fsco/sc-hme.jsp?lang=eng>

Apply for public health insurance (OHIP)

To access healthcare such as seeing a physician or using hospital services, you need to have an Ontario Health Insurance Program (OHIP) card.

Learn how to apply for OHIP at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/apply-ohip-and-get-health-card>, including what documents are needed, or call ServiceOntario INFOLine at [1-866-532-3161](tel:1-866-532-3161) (TTY: [1-800-387-5559](tel:1-800-387-5559)).

Open a bank account

In order to open a bank account, you must visit a bank and show identification such as a passport, a driver's license, a SIN, or another acceptable document.

For a list of acceptable documents, visit <https://settlement.org/ontario/daily-life/personal-finance/banks/how-do-i-open-a-bank-account/> or call the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada at 1-866-461-3222 for more information.

Connect with Ukrainian-Canadian Congress

The Canadian-Ukrainian Congress Hamilton Branch is the umbrella organization that coordinates activities and supports for Ukrainians in Hamilton.

To learn more, visit <https://www.facebook.com/ucchamilton.ca/> or <https://www.ucchamilton.ca/> or phone 905-575-7452.

The Canadian-Ukrainian Congress national headquarters also has a website: www.ucc.ca

Contact a local settlement service provider

Local service providers assist newcomers to settle in Hamilton by providing assistance with orientation, information and referrals, language instruction, employment supports, community connections and more.

To see a list of these organizations, what service they offer and their contact information, visit <https://www.hamiltonimmigration.ca/find-services>

Housing

Finding a place to live is likely to be one of your top priorities. Your housing options depend on your needs and your budget. Housing services and supports can help you find a place to rent, access financial supports, and answer questions about rights and responsibilities as a tenant.

- If you are in Hamilton or are planning to arrive in Hamilton and are looking for housing, fill out [this form](#) or look for it on the YMCA Hamilton Burlington Brantford website. This will help the YMCA find appropriate home/housing options for you.
- Hamilton Housing Help Centre can help you find housing, access subsidized or supporting housing, understand your rights as a renter, and more. Visit <https://www.housinghelpcentre.ca/about-us.html>.
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- This site also has rental listings <https://www.housinghelpcentre.ca/rental-listings.html>

Income support

Ukrainians in Ontario under the [Canada-Ukraine authorization for emergency travel](#) are eligible to apply for Emergency Assistance which provides temporary financial support for basic needs and shelter in crisis situations while you apply for the Federal Income Supports.

If you live in the City of Hamilton and do not have enough money for things like food, housing and prescription drugs, you may qualify for Emergency Assistance.

To apply:

- If you have a Canadian social insurance number (SIN), you can [apply online](#)
- If you do not have a social insurance number, contact your local Hamilton [Ontario Works office](#) or call 905-546-4800

Settlement services

Settlement organizations provide you with information and assistance while you adjust to living in Canada. They provide culturally sensitive services in several languages, including assistance in finding a place to live, learning English or French, finding employment, assessing educational and professional qualifications, referrals to other services such as legal help, connecting with the community, filling out forms and applications, and answering other general concerns related to immigration or settlement.

The following organizations can provide you with orientation and information as well as assess your needs and refer you to appropriate resources in the community:

- Immigrants Working Centre
Website: <https://iwchamilton.ca/services/settlement-services/>
Email: communications@iwchamilton.ca
Phone: 905-529-5209
- YMCA of Hamilton, Burlington and Brantford
Website: <https://www.ymcahbb.ca/new-canada>
Phone: 905-526-8452; 905-662-9400
- YWCA Hamilton
Website: <https://www.ywcahamilton.org/join/>
Phone: 905-522-9922 ext. 335

Language instruction

Newcomers can access free English and French language classes. Language classes help you learn or improve your language skills, provide opportunities to learn about Canadian culture and connect with the community. Classes are offered for people with different levels of English, from literacy to advanced and occupation specific.

- In order to enroll in these classes, you first need to book a language assessment appointment with YMCA of Hamilton, Burlington and Brantford by visiting <https://ymcagta.org/immigrant-services-new/language-assessment-and-referral-services-new> or calling 905-526-8452 or 905-662-9400.

- For information about which organizations offer language instruction, visit <https://www.hamiltonimmigration.ca/find-services>

Employment supports

Service providers in Hamilton can help you find employment. They can assist you with building job search skills, writing a resume, and preparing for interviews. They can connect you to mentorship opportunities, job placement opportunities, and more.

The following are some employment service providers in Hamilton and contact persons:

- **Mohawk College**
Beth Gibson, Email beth.gibson1@mohawkcollege.ca, 905-575-2421
- **College Boreal**
Luc Bonaventura, ucbonaventurea.amoussou@collegeboreal.ca, (905) 777-1562
- **YMCA**
Una Gibbons, una_gibbons@ymca.ca, 905-540-9613 or Michael Caudle, michael.caudle@ymcahbb.ca, 647-424-3271
- **YWCA**
Maisie Raymond-Brown, mrbrown@ywcahamilton.org, (905) 522-9922 ext. 151
- **Immigrants Working Centre**
Uzma Qureshi, uqureshi@iwchamilton.ca, (905) 529-5209 x #1239
- **Wesley**
Orsida Gorishti, Orsida.gorishti@wesley.ca, 289-237-8950
- **VPI Solutions**
Michelle Obermuller, michelleobermuller@vpi-inc.com, 905-387-2220
- **Goodwill** – focus on persons with disabilities
Rachel Hunt, rhunt@goodwillonline.ca, 905-575-2177
- **Path Employment** – focus on persons with disabilities
reception@pathemployment.com, 905-528-6611

Job Bank Canada has created a portal to connect Ukrainians to job opportunities. If you need help to find work, you can contact job bank and indicate that you are a Ukrainian national: <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/findajob/resources/jobsforukraine>

Translation and interpretation

Organizations in Hamilton have staff who speak Ukrainian or Russian or can refer you to appropriate interpretation services.

If you are looking for an interpreter or need a document translated from Ukrainian or Russian, you can contact Ukrainian Canadian Congress Hamilton Branch at 906-962-1916 or [Wesley](#) at 905-528-5629 x 302 or interpretation.services@wesley.ca.

Healthcare

All Canadian residents have access to health care. Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and those with a valid work permit or a temporary resident permit in Ontario qualify for public health insurance in Ontario known as OHIP. This includes people arriving in Ontario under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET). Your OHIP card covers most health services, such as services from physicians and hospital stays. Visit a Service Ontario location to apply and obtain your OHIP card: <https://www.ontario.ca/locations/serviceontario>

Health Emergencies

- For immediate emergency services and life-threatening situations, please **call 911** from any phone (mobile, home or public phones).

General Health Advice

- For general medical advice, you can call Telehealth Ontario at [1-866-797-0000](tel:1-866-797-0000)

Prescription Medications

- The Ontario Drug Benefit Program helps cover the cost of about 5,000 prescription drugs. [Learn how to get help paying for prescription drugs.](#)

Local Health Services:

If you require health care services, you can contact one of the following agencies to begin the process:

- Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre
Website: <http://hucchc.com>
Address: 181 Main Street West, Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y4
Phone: 905-522-3233
- Compass Community Health Centre
Website: <https://compassch.org/>
Address: 438 Hughson St. North, Hamilton, ON L8L 4N5
Phone: (905) 523-6611 ext 2000
- Refuge Hamilton Centre for Newcomer Health
Website: <https://newcomerhealth.ca/>
Address: 183 Hughson St South, Lower Level, Hamilton, L8N 2B6
Phone: 905-526-0000
- Centre de Santé Communautaire Hamilton/Niagara
Website: <http://www.cschn.ca/>

Address: 1320 Barton Street East, Hamilton, Ontario, L8H 2W1
Phone: 905-528-0163

Dental Services

- Children and youth 0-17 years old who meet the income eligibility criteria can access routine and emergency dental care through the Health Smiles Ontario (HSO) program. **Call 905-546-2424 ext. 5369 or visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-dental-care>**
- Adults 18-64 years old with dental treatment needs may qualify for Emergency Assistance through Ontario Works. Please contact your Ontario Works case manager at 905-546-4800 for more information
- Low income seniors 65 and older can receive free routine dental services, including dentures through the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP). **Call us at 905-546-2424 ext. 3789 or email dentalclinic@hamilton.ca for more information.**

COVID-19 Vaccination

- COVID-19 Vaccines are available for free for everyone 5 years of age and older. You can book an appointment or learn more about vaccines at www.hamilton.ca/GetYourVaccine or by calling the **COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline at 905-974-9848, option 7** for vaccine clinic information. Translation is available.

Long-Term Physical Disabilities

- If you have a long-term physical disability, you can get help paying for equipment and supplies through the [Assistive Devices Program](#).

Enrolling children in school

Hamilton has free public schools providing education to children from kindergarten to grade 12. Students are placed in their age appropriate grade. For information about what you need to enrol your child in school, click [here](#).

As newcomers to Canada, there are extra supports available to your children in order to adapt to schooling in Canada. In several schools across Hamilton, a settlement (SWIS) worker is available to provide families with important information to ensure their children's needs are met.

Hamilton has two English-language public school boards: Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) and Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (HWCDSB).

1) For registration with the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (HWCDSB), follow these steps:

- Step 1: Contact Nicole Baldini (Assessment Clerk) at **905-525-2930 Ext 2006**
- Step 2: Complete the online or enclosed HWCDSB Registration Form
- Step 3: Have the registration documents ready to bring with you to the school
- Step 4: Connect with the school to arrange an appointment to bring the documentation and complete the registration process

Online registration forms can be found below:

- Kindergarten (4-5 years old): [Kindergarten Registration Link](#)
- Elementary (6-13 years old): [Elementary Registration Link](#)
- Secondary (14-17 years old): [Secondary Registration Link](#)

The following are documents required for registration, but if you are missing any of these documents, HWCDSB will ensure there is no delay in the process:

1. Status Documentation (i.e. Visitor Visa, Electronic Travel Authorization, etc.);
2. Student(s) passport and/or birth certificate;
3. Proof of residency in the City of Hamilton; and
4. Previous school report card (secondary only, if available).

2) For registration with the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB), follow these steps:

- Step 1: Contact the HWDSB WELCOME CENTRE at **905-521-2554** to arrange a time for children to meet with a teacher for an English language assessment which will provide a starting point for English language programming at school.
- Step 2: Complete the enclosed HWDSB Registration Form
- Step 3: Have the registration documents ready to bring with you to the school. Even if you do not have all the required documents, continue with the registration process.
- Step 4: Connect with the school to arrange an appointment to bring the documentation and complete the registration process.

Online registration forms can be found below:

- Kindergarten (year of birth 2017 or 2016):
<https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/kindergarten/>
- Elementary grade 1-8 (year of birth 2015-2008):
<https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementary/plan-for-school/>
- Secondary grade 9-12 (year of birth 2009-2003):
<https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/secondary/plan-for-high-school/>

English as a Second Language support is available in elementary schools and at four secondary schools: Westdale, Bernie Custis, Glendale, and Nora Frances Henderson.

Finding childcare

Childcare centres offer care for children while their parents work or study.

The City of Hamilton offers [financial support for childcare](#) to assist low-income families with their childcare expenses.

You can look for childcare centres across the city by access Hamilton Child Care Registry at:
<https://www.hamilton.ca/social-services/early-years-and-child-care-services/hamilton-child-care-registry>

There are different types of childcare available in Ontario:

- Licensed childcare centre
- Licensed home childcare
- Before-school and after-school care
- Unlicensed care

To learn more about the different types of childcare and how they are regulated, or to search for licensed childcare for your children, please visit the [Ontario Ministry of Education website](#).

Credentials assessment

Educational and professional qualifications and standards vary from country to country. Regulated occupations and trades need you to be licensed by a provincially regulatory body to work in that occupation. That is why it is important to assess your qualifications in Canada.

Recognizing that individuals displaced by war may have limited documentation to prove their education or qualifications, the World Education Service (WES) Gateway Program offers credentials assessment services to such individuals, including Ukrainians.

To learn more about steps needed to assess your credentials, visit

<https://www.mohawkcollege.ca/new-to-canada-we-have-free-english-classes-and-more/more-programs-and-services/wes-gateway-program>

Transportation

There are many transportation options to get around the city or travel outside the city. Hamilton has public buses and dedicated bike lanes within the city as well as train and bus services to other cities. Public transit is wheelchair accessible, and there are special transportation services for people living with disabilities.

Hamilton Street Railway (**HSR**) is our public transit service, with buses operating all around the city.

- To view the map of HSR service, bus schedules and fare, please visit <https://www.hamilton.ca/hsr-bus-schedules-fares>.
- You need a Presto card to ride with HSR, available at www.prestocard.ca or call 1-877-378-6123 to learn more. For the locations where you can buy a presto card, visit <https://www.prestocard.ca/en/find-an-outlet/customer-service-outlets>
- There are discounts for seniors, youth and low-income individuals.
- HSR is free for children up to 12 years of age and individuals over the age of 80.

Hamilton has a network of **bike lanes** across the city. You can rent a bike from many Bike Share locations. To learn more, visit <https://hamilton.socialbicycles.com/>

If you would like to drive your own vehicle, an Ontario **driver's license** and insurance are required. To learn what steps to take to obtain your driver's license, also links to the driver's

handbook and driver examination centres: <https://settlement.org/ontario/daily-life/transportation/driver-s-licence/how-do-i-get-an-ontario-driver-s-licence/>

Ukrainian organizations and groups

Volunteer-based ethnic associations in Hamilton provide support, programs and activities to increase your sense of belonging and connections in the community. Members often share a common language and culture.

Ukrainian-Canadian Congress in Hamilton is the umbrella organization that coordinates activities and supports for Ukrainians. Here is a list of Ukrainian organizations/groups in Hamilton:

- Ukrainian-Canadian Congress Hamilton Branch:
Website: <https://www.ucchamilton.ca/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ucchamilton.ca/>
- Ukrainian Youth Association (Hamilton Branch)
Email: cymhamilton@gmail.com
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CYM-Hamilton-751200621618456/>
- Ukrainian National Youth Federation (UNYF) Hamilton
Contact: paulabochnak@gmail.com
- Ukrainian National Federation (Hamilton Branch)
Website: <https://unfcanada.ca/branch/branch-hamilton/>
Address: 170 Parkdale N, Hamilton, ON L8H 5X2
Phone: 1.905.544.5664
- Ukrainian Women's Organization (Hamilton Branch)
No contact information.
For inquiries, contact Ukrainian National Federation Hamilton Branch above.
- League of Ukrainian Canadian Women (Hamilton Branch)
Website: <http://www.lucw.ca/>
- League of Ukrainian Canadians (Hamilton Branch)
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/LeagueofUkrainianCanadians/events/>