



Upwardly Global's Employer Action Guide: Ukraine Crisis

Introduction

Since the start of the Russian invasion in February 2022, over [5 million](#) people have fled Ukraine, creating one of the biggest refugee crises since the Second World War. Most displaced Ukrainians are fleeing to neighboring European countries, including Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Germany and Hungary. It is estimated that many will stay in these border countries in hopes of the conflict ending and returning home, and others - seeking more permanent resettlement - are going further west to Germany, France, the U.K, Canada and the United States.

In response to the unfolding crisis, on March 24, 2022 the Biden Administration [announced](#) that the United States will accept up to 100,000 Ukrainians and other displaced people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine through a range of humanitarian pathways.



**~100,000
Expected
Arrivals**

Many refugees from Ukraine have professional backgrounds; some 60% of Ukrainian women have a Bachelor's degree or higher. Even as we wait for more details from the Biden Administration, it is critical that the business community prepares to provide this community with access not only to employment – but to skill-aligned careers -- that will ensure their social and economic integration.

The international business community has a vital role to play in supporting Ukrainian refugees, and Upwardly Global is well-positioned to not only empower newly arrived Ukrainians but to connect them with employer partners who want to take action. This guide is designed to bolster employers in taking immediate action to support Ukrainians as they integrate into the US.

Barriers & Challenges

Upwardly Global is actively working to remove barriers, build pathways, and guide companies to hire, train, and mentor internationally-trained immigrants and refugees. By [engaging our network](#) of hundreds of employers, we have honed in on the [key barriers](#) faced by jobseekers on the road to employment as well as [corporate challenges](#) presented when sourcing, recruiting and integrating diverse talent. Given these constraints, here is what employers need to know:

Internationally-trained professionals (ITPs) face barriers throughout the job search process from recruitment and interviewing to onboarding and advancement.¹ Upon arrival, they may not know how to navigate the U.S. labor market, understand where their skills fit in, or what roles they are qualified for. ITPs who come from industries with heavy licensing requirements, such as healthcare, may need support in re-licensing or re-/up-skilling to stay competitive.



Positions match skills, but foreign experience is not recognized.



Uncertainty about cultural norms in the interview process. Hiring team lacks diversity. No U.S. references.



Unfamiliar with compensation. Onboarding does not cover U.S. workplace expectations.



Cultural differences limit social capital. Don't see themselves represented in leadership.

Despite having years of professional experience, the current support system for new arrivals encourages “rapid-attachment” jobs, which are oftentimes entry-level positions, underutilizing their many skills and leading to “brain waste” and lost wages.² Newcomers often lack professional networks, which can stymie their professional advancement,³ since 85% of jobs are secured through social networks and “word of mouth” referrals. This lack of U.S.-based networks may pose challenges during the interview process when a candidate is asked for references.

Moreover, ITPs are often not aware of cultural norms in U.S. workplaces such as the use of eye contact or the American way of “storytelling” and self-promotion during the interview process if they have come from collective cultures. This can lead employers to believe candidates lack confidence or assertiveness.

1) See Upwardly Global's [Jobseeker Journey Map](#).

2) Center for American Progress, "[Progress 2050: New Ideas for a Diverse America](#)".

3) LinkedIn, "[New Survey Reveals 85% of All Jobs are Filled Via Networking](#)".

Practices in recruitment and hiring can at times unintentionally perpetuate unconscious bias, adding to the challenges ITPs face. For example, online application forms with mandatory fields that do not include foreign institutions can prevent a jobseeker from even applying. Employers may not consider ITPs due to confusion about work authorization, difficulty translating foreign degrees and credentials, or challenges evaluating international work experience. Refugees may display gaps in their resume, which is often cause for recruiters to automatically screen a candidate out, without considering that the candidate may be fleeing persecution (and what resiliency and problem-solving skills one gains during that experience!). Additionally, phone interviews are a huge barrier for ITPs, due to language differences and accents, as well as the inability to use or properly evaluate body language.



What Is Important to Know about Ukrainian Newcomers

As we are faced with the important challenge of integrating newly arrived Ukrainians into our country and workforce, here is key information that the business community needs to know about Ukrainian refugee professionals:

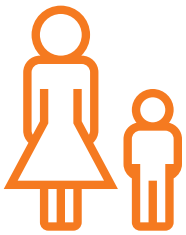
This is the largest refugee crisis since WWII - over 3 million women and children have fled to Poland, alone (that's the same as 7% of the total Polish population).



Some will be fully work authorized. There are multiple pathways for Ukrainians to come into the United States, including: Temporary Protected Status (TPS), Asylum, US Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), and Humanitarian Parole (See "Legal Pathways" below for details). These visas will allow Ukrainian refugees to resettle in the United States and grant them work authorization, but the categories are complicated and companies who want to support the population - and access the talent they bring - must be willing to think outside of the box (see examples below).



Those on humanitarian parole will be eligible for Employment Authorization Documents (EADs). This status offers temporary work authorization. We encourage companies to hire based on this temporary status, and help advocate for the quick processing of newcomers, and a timely shift from temporary to permanent status. Once in the country, newly arrived individuals can apply for asylum, family-based migration or other special based visa statuses



They are mostly women & children. Due to military conscription, Ukrainian men between the ages of 18-60 are not allowed to leave the country. An estimated 90% of displaced Ukrainians are women and children. We estimate that 60% of the women have bachelor's degrees and some professional experience. Employers should be ready to support them, as many will seek employment soon, at the skill level they deserve.

Hot tip | ITPs are driven and loyal. Ninety percent (**90%**) of UpGlo program participants, including SIVs, are retained one year after hire into internships or full-time employment.



Wrap-around services are needed. While many Ukrainian women will have skills and experience to lend to the U.S. workforce, they are oftentimes the sole caretaker for their families and may need vital childcare support to allow them to have time to prepare for job searching, language learning, and to up-skill or reskill if necessary. Furthermore, as with any conflict situation, mental health support will be needed to cope with the trauma of leaving their homes, loved ones, and continuing to worry about family members on the frontlines. We encourage employers to consider providing additional support to women professionals in the form of wrap-around services as they resettle for childcare, housing, mental health, and transportation.

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Upskilling and reskilling may be necessary. While some have high skill levels, we anticipate that English language proficiency will be a challenge for integrating into the country and culture, and a key work function challenge. They will need **English language support and essential or soft skills/cultural training.**

In addition, soft or adaptive skills are just as important as “hard” technical skills in hiring. Employers should be upfront and explicit about the soft skills that are valued in the hiring process and workforce, and support soft skill training programs. This highlights an opportunity for employers, government programs, and nonprofits to provide more support to ensure success.



Talent-rich in Tech and IT. Ukraine is a [highly educated](#) country. Ukrainian tech workers are well known in Eastern Europe and are a cause for major companies such as [Google](#) and [Microsoft](#) having operations in Ukraine prior to the current conflict. In fact, many [Ukrainian tech workers](#) were already operating in English for international companies and have since relocated to neighboring countries and re-hired by those same companies. Companies should consider hiring displaced English-speaking tech workers remotely.



Many hope to return home to Ukraine, but a quick return is unlikely. Our refugee resettlement, government, and corporate partners have highlighted an on-going trend of Ukrainian refugees staying near the Ukrainian border in hopes of the conflict ending soon and returning to their homes. However, it's estimated that 50% of the Ukrainians displaced will not be able to return to Ukraine post-war.

It is already estimated that if the war ended today, the recovery and rebuilding process in Ukraine would take at least 8-10 years, and the labor market is expected to take longer to be restored. Therefore, Ukrainians might need welcome support to be extended longer than anticipated.

This reflects a changing situation that could last over many months - even years - as we know many refugee situations are protracted and on average, refugees can spend as long as [30 years in exile](#). It is for this reason that UpGlo reiterates to employers the opportunity that remote work could provide to this population - continuity, stability, and wages both for self-sufficiency and repatriated funds to support families who remain in conflict zones.

Legal Pathways for Ukrainians in the U.S.

Special Presentation | Check out a [special webinar](#) hosted by our partners at [Fragomen](#) -the premiere law firm providing exclusively immigration service- on legal pathways for Ukrainian refugees in the U.S.



- **Temporary Protected Status (TPS)** - Ukrainians in-country prior to March 1, 2022 (including those on tourist, student and temporary visas, granted parole, have pending asylum applications, or hold a non-immigrant status, such as F-1 or B-2) may be eligible for TPS. TPS designation allows individuals to legally stay in the United States for 18 months, with the possibility of extension, and apply for immediate work authorization. The federal registrar is expected to allow processing soon, in which case Ukrainians would receive work permits rapidly, and will be employable in the next 30-90 days. The Department of Homeland Security estimates some 75,000 Ukrainians currently residing in the United States prior to March 1 would qualify for TPS.



- **Asylum** - Ukrainians currently residing in the United States may apply for asylum due to their inability to return home based on a well-founded fear of persecution on account of their nationality, race, religion, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Once granted, asylum seekers are put on a path to permanent legal residence. Many Ukrainians will be eligible for asylum due to the on-going conflict, and because many can demonstrate family ties or “family reunification”, however, the processing and adjudication of asylum applications can take several months or even years.



- **Refugees** - U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP): Ukrainians eligible for USRAP must have already fled Ukraine; cite an inability to return due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on one of five protected grounds (nationality, race, religion, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion); and currently be residing outside their home country. USRAP coordinates with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees as well as the International Organization for Migration to bring refugees to a safe third country.



- **Parolee Humanitarian Parole:** Ukrainians residing outside of the United States may request Parole status to immediately enter the country due to emergency and humanitarian needs. Individuals granted Parole are allowed to enter temporarily and apply for temporary employment authorization, but are not provided with a path to lawful permanent residence or immigration status. This is generally considered to be the most expedited path of entry for those not already residing in the United States.

Humanitarian Parole

According to the official White House statement, this initiative will prioritize Ukrainians seeking to reunify with family members already residing in the United States.

Official government numbers on Ukrainians admitted to the United States under these pathways have not been published but most estimate we have received 20,000 individuals; additionally, as noted above- the White House continues to create and share its plan for reaching its stated goal of assisting 100,000 individuals seeking refuge and protection.

Meanwhile, the US Texas- Mexico border is being inundated with Ukrainians seeking to cross into the United States and the crisis in Ukraine continues. These are all indicators that we know and will have the continued opportunity to welcome, support and integrate displaced Ukrainians.

Upwardly Global Partners and Collaborators Take Action

In response to the emerging humanitarian crisis, we activated our employer network of nearly 60 employers and convened a session of our DEI Working Group to help orient the business community to the conflict, what to expect on American soil, the situation unfolding abroad, and how employers have the unique ability to activate their resources and open their pipelines to this population.⁴

The response from the companies was great, and we have had active conversations with dozens of companies to better track employer trends - both in Europe and N. America - are now actively engaging over 30 corporations to explore ways to support Ukrainians.

In addition, we are exploring a pilot partnership with actors on the ground in Europe to share knowledge and tools that we have gained from decades of work with immigrant and refugee professionals – and new and innovative tools and capabilities that we are developing now – to ensure that refugees from Ukraine get jobs at their skill level. As such, we have had the opportunity to meet European colleagues from our multinational partners and learn of new trends on the ground both internationally and in the U.S.

4) Upwardly Global is engaging corporate America to better understand the roadblocks in hiring foreign talent. Together with partners at Accenture, UpGlo brought together corporate leaders and internationally-trained professionals to envision corporate facing products- **from internships, to an inclusion playbook, to an index** - that will change the DEI commitment calculus from a “nice to do” mandate to a “must do” action plan (see the Executive Summary from this initial work). Launched in 2020, Upwardly Global’s DEI Employer Working Group, made up of over 55 corporations, meets bi-monthly to engage with peers, share best practices for Inclusive hiring models, hot tips, resources, challenges, and co-create solutions to better integrate immigrant and refugee talent into our workforce

Employer Trends & Practices

We are encouraged by the efforts of many of our employer partners to take action. We'd like to highlight some leading examples and models led by some of our new and longstanding UpGlo employer partners and collaborators to transform the lives of Ukrainian refugees and the broader immigrant and refugee community.

Accenture

A global professional services company with leading capabilities in digital, cloud and security, Accenture works with clients, people and communities across the globe to make a world of difference. Accenture Chair & CEO, Julie Sweet is Co-Chair of the Welcome.US [CEO Council](#), an effort to accelerate and scale private sector support. The Council focuses on three key areas of impact: meeting the initial resettlement needs of the individuals and families who fled Afghanistan and Ukraine; supporting the employment of newcomers through new training and hiring initiatives; and mobilizing their employees, customer bases, and peers in the business community to join the Welcome movement. Through Welcome.US, Accenture has also supported the launch of an [Employment Exchange](#), which curates employment opportunities for refugees from employers that have expressed a strong interest in hiring this population to meet their workforce needs.

Amazon/AWS

Amazon recently launched the [Welcome Door Program](#), a U.S.-based employment support program for refugee and humanitarian-based immigrant employees that offers a citizenship assistance portal, free legal support, and mentorship. The initiative provides additional resources and support, along with reimbursement for Employment Authorization Document (EAD) fees. The program also offers employees access to upskilling opportunities, including free college tuition and English as a Second Language (ESL) proficiency through the Career Choice program. In addition, Amazon launched two humanitarian support hubs in Poland and Slovakia to help those affected by the crisis in Ukraine. Read more about Amazon's efforts to provide assistance to Ukrainian refugees [here](#).

Google

Upwardly Global has implemented a "deep digital skilling" model with support from Google.org to make the Google Career Certificates more effective for our population of immigrant and refugee professionals (measured by increased program completion and time to completion, as well as enhanced quality of experience, and stronger placement outcomes). Our cohorts incorporate two overarching elements: (1) cohort based learning - we gather job seekers undergoing the course in the same time period into cohorts. While the learning is individual, these meetings meaningfully enhance a sense of peer-peer support and enhance course learning; and (2) Volunteer Mentoring - we engage Google volunteers as mentors to provide guidance and learning support.

Currently, we are actively working with 125 job seekers with Googler mentors/volunteers to offer Google Career Certificates which has been a valuable part of Upwardly Global's Ukrainian response. This collaborative 4-5 month program launched in mid 2022 with 5 cohorts who we are assisting together, and preparing for U.S. workforce integration.

JP Morgan Chase

As the war in Ukraine continues, JPMorgan Chase has continued to monitor the resulting humanitarian crisis to consider how it can best deploy its resources to meet growing and changing needs in the region. To support humanitarian relief efforts, the firm has made a \$10 million philanthropic commitment, including matching employee donations, to support a number of organizations working to provide emergency food, housing and medical services to those in need. Beneficiaries include International Medical Corps, International Rescue Committee, Polska Akcja Humanitarna, The Chamber of Commerce of the Polish Hotel Industry, United States Fund for UNICEF and World Central Kitchen.

In addition, the firm has announced a new paid work and training program based in Warsaw for refugees and people displaced by the war. This new program will help those displaced by the war continue their careers and enhance their skills and support successful candidates with settling down, including by providing help with securing housing, pre-school care and an option to enroll children in a specified school following the Ukrainian curriculum. The firm will also supply dedicated training to work in one of the multiple teams present in Warsaw.

LinkedIn

Aligned with their vision of creating economic opportunity for every member of global workforce, LinkedIn is continuously identifying ways their platform can help those directly impacted by the war in Ukraine, especially those seeking employment. Since 2016, LinkedIn has worked with nonprofits that help refugees resettle after times of conflict and connect to economic opportunity in their new countries – including Upwardly Global since 2017. They launched a [landing page](#) in April of 2022 with tools for job seekers hoping to land a job that fits their immediate needs and situations. The webpage is available in Arabic, Dari, English, French, Russian, Spanish and Ukrainian. In addition, LinkedIn's team of global editors have created a 24/7 newsfeed from trusted sources with updates on the war on Ukraine on the LinkedIn homepage and on the LinkedIn [News page](#). In addition to these resources and amplifying work of nonprofits providing critical support to people impacted by the war in Ukraine, LinkedIn has committed to giving over \$2 million in a Refugee Relief Fund to support global humanitarian needs this year. Since 2019, more than 300 LinkedIn employees have helped 1200+ refugees in Upwardly Global programs utilize their platform to connect to opportunity through over 30 LinkedIn Career Coaching sessions.

Microsoft

Microsoft global skills initiative is a program that allows individuals access to take in-depth learning paths and to jump-start their careers. They are also able to demonstrate achievements industry-recognized Microsoft certifications for relevant roles. UpGlo and Microsoft offer this to hundreds of immigrants and refugees together each year and are particularly excited to extend this to Ukrainian refugees looking to restart their lives and careers.

Oliver Wyman

The global management consultancy firm has initiated a refugee hiring welcome initiative. In 2015, they started deliberate efforts to offer refugees either short-term job security or a whole new career pathway across consulting, business functions, and other specialized units. Their goal is to make a long-lasting positive impact on the refugees, helping them to find stability and flourish.

Today, Oliver Wyman continues to recruit talented candidates from the refugee populations around the world, with special focus on Ukrainians displaced globally by the crisis in their home country. The insights these individuals give into the challenges refugees face is truly humbling, strengthen the company's dedication to support more people displaced from their homes, and inspire others to follow the same path of becoming a positive change in refugees' life. To learn more, you can visit their [Refugee Hiring hub](#).

PepsiCo

With more than 3,100 associates in its Ukraine operations, PepsiCo teams have been working tirelessly to support 1,400 colleagues that have been displaced and care for those that remain in the country. In the first three weeks, the company facilitated 25 conveyances carrying an estimated 600 people to safety and acted quickly to convert a warehouse in Western Ukraine into a safe haven for associates and their families. In addition to providing \$15 million in humanitarian aid via NGO partners and guaranteeing Ukrainian employee salaries until the end of the year, PepsiCo has supported initiatives driven by associates.

In Poland and Romania, PepsiCo employees transformed office spaces into temporary housing and relocation support services for more than 350 families. Employees in Romania mobilized quickly to open a Ukrainian childcare and learning center for 150 children aged 3 to 17. PepsiCo's Europe IT team developed an app to match Ukraine refugees with co-workers offering rooms, supplies, or jobs at PepsiCo locations outside of Ukraine; "Donate a Day of Safety" a campaign launched by the marketing team, that allowed associates to donate funds that will be provided to cover housing costs; and PepsiCo employees from over 50 countries donated more than \$500,000 through a matching campaign, which the PepsiCo Foundation will match for another contribution of just over \$1 million (USD).

What Employers Can Do



HIRE. Build special hiring initiatives and be open to different hiring processes such as paid job shadowing, returnships and apprenticeships that give new arrivals U.S. workforce experience and a chance to prove themselves. This could include special assistance for Ukrainian refugees/asylum seekers in the hiring process and HR training on what recruiters can expect.



INTERNSHIPS/RETURNSHIPS. Offer paid, short-term professional opportunities that allow the company to get familiar with job seekers, and allow job seekers to gain exposure to U.S. workplace cultures. This opportunity helps build adaptive-skills and U.S. industry experience for their résumés.



TRAINING. If your company offers a training that helps open up career pathways in a particular industry (i.e. Google and Google Python, or Salesforce Certifications), make that training available to job seekers through our skilling offerings, prioritizing access to Ukrainian immigrants first. Consider offering financial support to Ukrainians who need to invest in English language courses.



MENTORSHIP/VOLUNTEERISM. Commit company employees to mentor Ukrainian refugees through this transition, and into gainful employment. Culturally attuned corporate volunteers are critical to job training and successful workforce and societal integration.



WRAP-AROUND SUPPORT FOR WOMEN

We expect many women and children coming with the second wave of men coming much later. Women will need specialized support in the form of childcare, housing, English language training, and re/up-skilling opportunities. Companies should consider offering this type of support and partnering with local non-profit organizations that are experts in providing these services.



WIDESPREAD INTEGRATION & TOP LEVEL COMMITMENT. Companies aren't typically set up to ensure Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) objectives and practices are owned and implemented widely across the whole organization. There could be a tendency to view DEI as the responsibility of HR, or a specialist team, rather than integrating these principles into wider business management. It is vital for immigrants and refugees to have allies within companies at all levels. Leadership buy-in and tangible commitments --like those of Accenture's leaders -- must be balanced with implementation level buy-in to successfully move the bar on immigrant and refugee hiring.



BRANDING & MESSAGING. Use your channels and leadership to speak out on the value of these new arrivals to our economy and communities, and encourage peers in the industry to do so as well.



DONATE. Support UpGlo's Ukraine crisis response efforts. Click [here](#) to learn more, click [here](#) to donate, or contact us.





About Us

UpGlo is the only national non-profit organization dedicated to integrating foreign-trained immigrants and refugees, including Afghan refugees and SIVs, into the U.S. workforce. These newcomers face [barriers](#) at each step of the job search process including lack of professional networks, resume gaps, and often compounding factors due to their race and immigrant status (75% of UpGlo jobseekers identify with communities of color). At the same time, employers face another set of unique challenges in filling [five million open roles, skills shortages](#), and recruiting and hiring diverse talent. Based on our experience of working with internationally trained professionals over the last 20 years, we have developed a suite of employer-facing trainings and tools to prepare employers for recruiting, interviewing, and onboarding internationally-trained professionals. These best practices and resources are aimed at moving the mark for more diverse and inclusive workplaces.

To learn more about how business can aid resettlement and workforce integration or join this growing group, please contact Upwardly Global; [Jennie Murray](#), VP of Programs, and [Kim Cohen](#), Director of Employer Engagement.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the WES Mariam Assefa Fund for providing the initial funding for the launch of Upwardly Global's DEI Employer Group Working launched in Dec 2020 and its continued support of our Employer Engagement work.