Ukraine-Russia war: Canada announces new temporary residence pathway for Ukrainians

March 22, 2022

On March 17, 2022, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) announced the launch of the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET), an accelerated temporary residence pathway available to Ukrainians and their immediate family members.

The goal of the CUAET is to offer a fast solution for Ukrainians and their families seeking safe haven. The CUAET is intended to be temporary – not a resettlement program – as it is anticipated that many participants will want to return to Ukraine once it is safe to do so.

Details of the CUAET

Individuals eligible to apply under the CUAET may stay in Canada as temporary residents for up to three years and will be able to work immediately. Many regular requirements associated with a normal visitor visa or work permit have been waived under the CUAET, including most associated application fees. Applicants are also exempt from Canada's COVID-19 vaccination entry requirements (however, all other public health requirements for travel continue to apply).

The CUAET is available to Ukrainians and their immediate family members of any nationality, whether or not they have already arrived in Canada. Those who are already in Canada may apply to extend their stay through the program.

CUAET applicants are encouraged to apply for a work permit at the same time that they submit their visa application. The Government of Canada has created a Jobs for Ukraine webpage, enabling local organizations and employers to connect with Ukrainians seeking work in their communities. Elementary and high school students can attend school as soon as they arrive in Canada, while post-secondary students can apply for a study permit once on Canadian soil.

Application requirements

Overseas applicants must apply for a Canadian visitor visa through the online application system. They are also required to submit their biometrics, which can be done at any visa application centre outside of Ukraine. Biometrics instruction letters issued by IRCC will contain contact information for applicants to schedule appointments. IRCC will use mobile biometrics units and other measures to accommodate, given that Visa Application Centres (VACs) in Ukraine are closed. Applicants do not need to have a valid passport; IRCC may issue single journey travel documents on a case-by-case basis.

IRCC has mobilized resources and is establishing a dedicated service channel that will prioritize applications from Ukraine. It is expected that shifting resources to respond to the crisis in Ukraine will have an impact on other application streams, depending on how many people take advantage of the CUAET.

If you have further questions on the new developments and changes to the immigration scheme for Ukrainian nationals, please reach out to your BLG lawyer or any of the key contacts listed below.

By

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