

Region: Vancouver Island



Info Sheet: Housing Data Tables – Resettled Refugees and Displaced Ukrainians

The following housing data tables show regional housing costs in relation to the income supports that resettled refugees and displaced Ukrainians receive upon arrival to Canada. This info sheet aims to show the disparity between the supports that newcomer refugees and displaced Ukrainians are eligible for compared to the cost of living in each of the regions in British Columbia. In this info-sheet we focus on the **Vancouver Island** region of British Columbia.

Average rent / vacancy rates for the Vancouver Island region

The below rates are based on October 2023 rates released in January 2024 for the purpose-built rental market by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

City	1 Bdrm Rent	Vacancy Rate	2 Bdrm Rent	Vacancy Rate	3+ Bdrm Rent	Vacancy Rate
Campbell River	\$1,196	1.2%	\$1,604	0.7%	\$2,048	*N/A
Courtenay	\$1,312	2.0%	\$1,475	0.5%	\$1,440	0.0%
Duncan	\$1,012	3.2%	\$1,168	1.2%	\$1,662	*N/A
Port Alberni	\$953	1.5%	\$1,204	0.8%	\$1,172	*N/A
Victoria	\$1,427	1.4%	\$1,839	1.6%	\$2,089	1.1%
Average	\$1,180	1.9%	\$1,458	1.0%	\$1,682	0.6%

*N/A – information not available

Source: [CMHC housing market information portal](https://www.cmhc.ca/en/housing-market-information-portal)

Income support for Government Assisted Refugees (GARs)

A GAR is a person who resettles to Canada because they have been determined to be a [Convention refugee](#). GARs receive financial and other support to help cover basic needs from the Government of Canada through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) for up to one year after their arrival in Canada.

Source: https://www.canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship/helpcentre/glossary.html#government_assisted_refugee

Income Support	Description	Individual - monthly	Family of 4 (couple and 2 children) - monthly
RAP assistance	Food, incidentals, shelter, transportation and a communication allowance. <i>Note: Other special allowances may be added based on need.</i>	\$1,010 (first 12 months)	\$1,726 (first 12 months)
Income assistance – Provincial Government	Shelter and food and basic needs. <i>Note: Support allowances may vary based on family make-up.</i>	\$1,060 (month 13+)	\$1,895 (month 13+)

Income support for Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) holders

The Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) allows Ukrainians and their family members to enter Canada, offering extended temporary status and allowing them to work, study and live in Canada for up to 3 years. Federal government support is only available to CUAET visa holders arriving to Canada by March 31, 2024.

Income Support	Description	Individual	Family of 4 (couple and 2 children)
One-time payment (Federal government)	Shelter and food and basic needs.	\$3,000	\$9,000
Temporary Hardship Assistance (Provincial government – for up to 12 months)	Hardship assistance is based on need and eligibility.	Up to \$1,060 Monthly	Up to \$1,895 Monthly

Sources: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/06/financial-assistance-now-available-for-ukrainians-in-canada.html>
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022SDPR0044-001029>

There is a high level of housing unaffordability for all B.C. residents. However, this is exacerbated for resettled refugees and CUAET populations as they face additional challenges such as finding employment, learning a new language and settling in a new country while managing culture shock and in some cases, trauma and mental health difficulties at the same time.

The income supports listed above are for food, shelter, transportation, communication allowance and other incidentals. However, these expenses as well as costs for utilities, internet, phone, clothing and other basic expenses are higher than the financial supports. British Columbia's annual inflation rate dropped from 6.6% in 2022 to 4.4% in 2023. However, food prices have increased 5.9% from September 2022 to September 2023. The total average cost of utilities in BC is \$410 per month, which includes electricity, water, internet and cable.



What is the Transportation Loan?

GARs in Canada must pay for their travel to Canada. The Canadian government offers resettled refugees the option of taking out a loan.

How does it work?

- The International Organization for Migration (IOM) organizes all pre-arrival services and travel to Canada.
- In the interim, travel costs are covered by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) under the Immigration Loans Program (ILP) through the Transportation Loan.
- The loan can be applied to other costs including medical exams, travel document fees, services fees, and some accommodations / meal expenses while the individual is on their way to Canada.
- The loan must be paid back to the Government of Canada after the 12th month from when the loan was issued.

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