

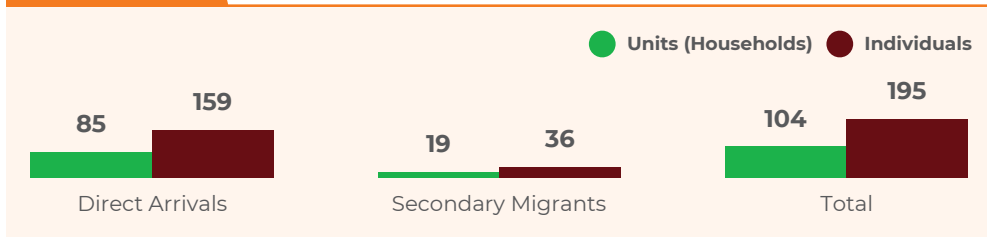


GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEE (GAR) ARRIVALS IN BC | 2026

REPORTING PERIOD: JANUARY 1–MARCH 31, 2026

This quarterly bulletin provides an overview of Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR) arrivals to British Columbia in the first quarter of 2026. It summarizes arrival numbers and provides analysis of what these figures mean for the province's resettlement landscape.

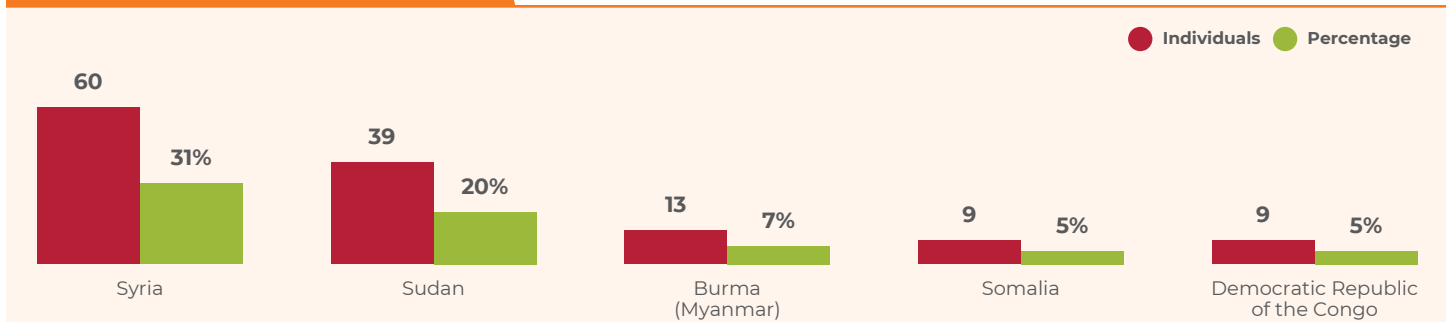
ARRIVALS



The data captures how Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) arrived and moved within BC between January 1 to March 31, 2026. Below is an explanation of each category and what it means for service providers and communities.

- **Direct arrivals** represent GAR families who came straight to BC through the federal Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). A total of 159 GARs (85 households) arrived directly to BC this quarter, reflecting a decrease from previous periods.
- **Secondary migrants** are GARs who first settled in another province but later moved to BC. Secondary migration remains steady, with 36 individuals relocating from other provinces, indicating BC continues to be a preferred destination post-initial settlement.
- **Self-relocated** within BC refers to GARs moving between BC communities after their initial placement. No self-relocations within BC were recorded in this quarter.

TOP 5 SOURCE COUNTRIES



Arrivals this quarter were led by Syria and Sudan, together accounting for over half of all GARs arrivals.

This reflects shifting global displacement trends and Canada's response to emerging crises, while continued arrivals from other regions highlight the ongoing diversity of refugee populations.

IN THIS ISSUE

- GAR Arrivals Overview & Trends
- Demographics, Languages & Source Countries
- Settlement Patterns & Destinations in British Columbia
- Key Insights & Additional Resources

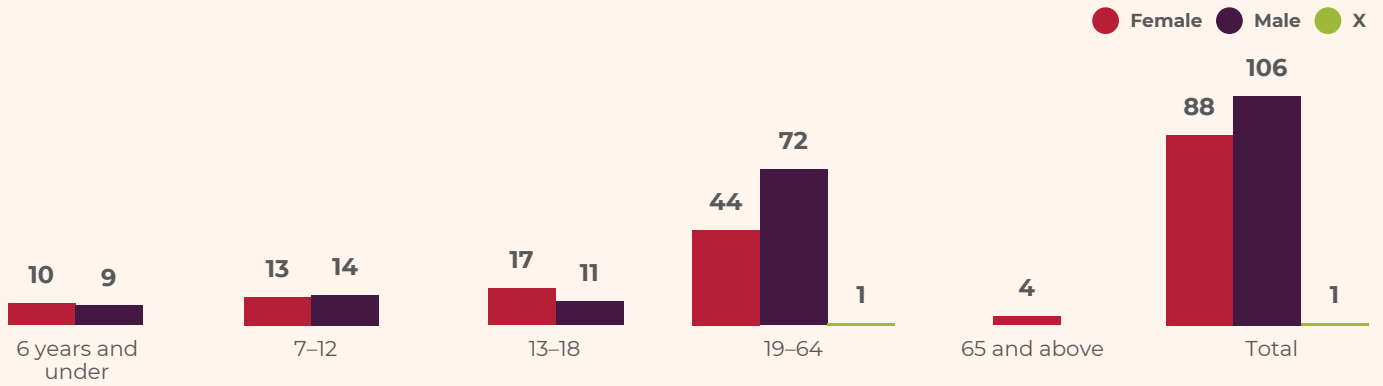
GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEE (GAR)

A person who is outside Canada and has been determined to be a Convention refugee and who receives financial and other support from the Government of Canada or Province of Quebec for up to one year after their arrival in Canada.

GARs are selected from applicants referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other referral organizations.

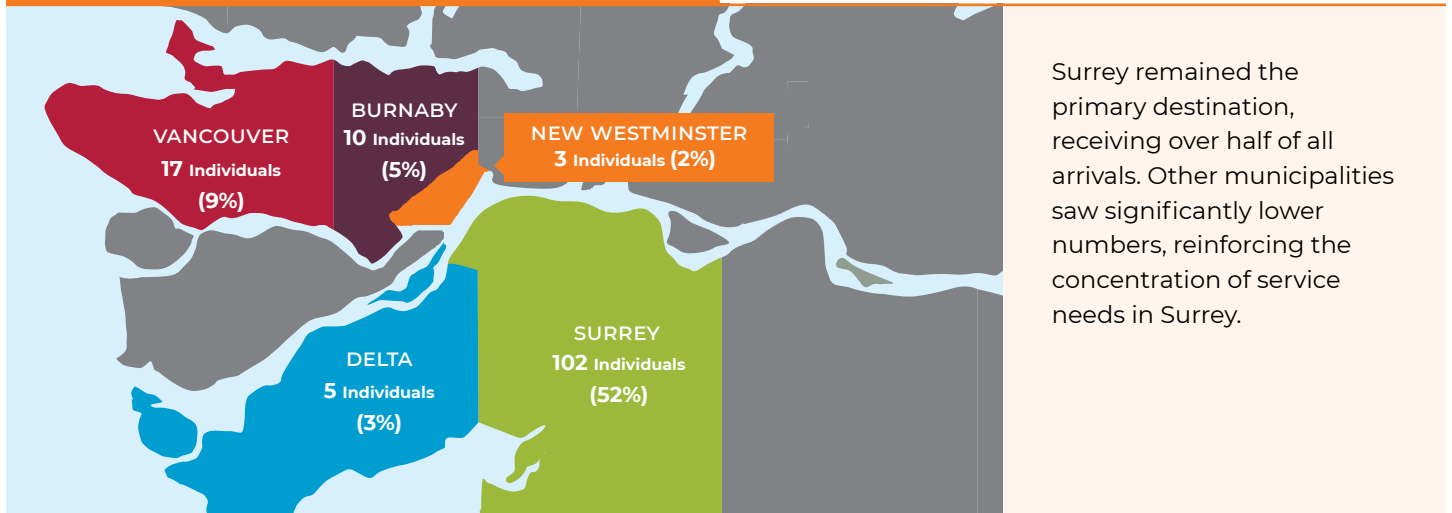
SOURCE: canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship/helpcentre/glossary.html#government_assisted_refugee

AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION

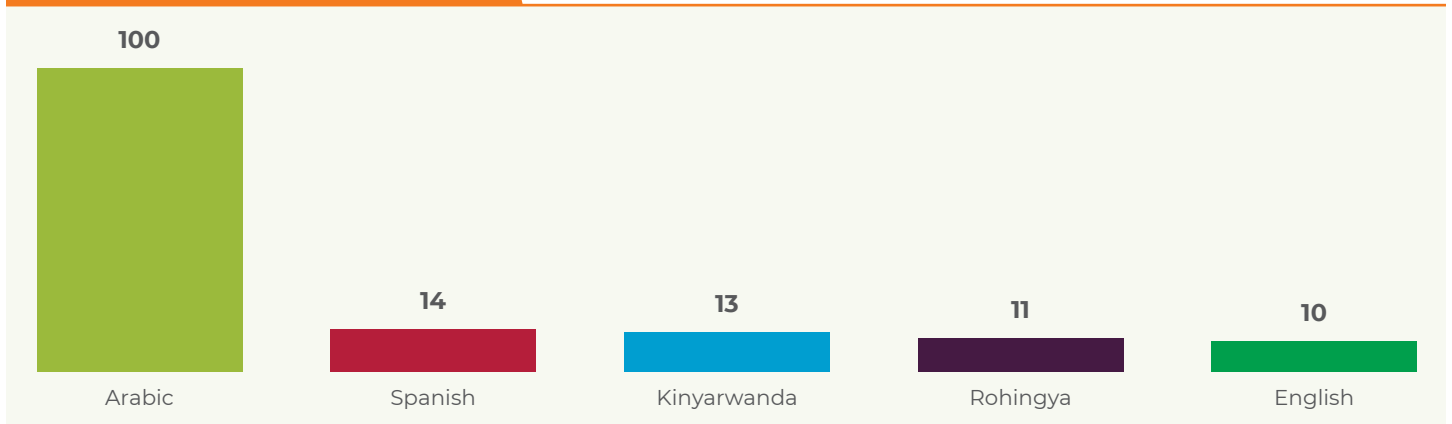


Most arrivals were adults aged 19–64, with children and youth making up a significant portion, indicating predominantly family-based arrivals. A slightly higher proportion of males was observed, particularly among adults.

TOP 5 DESTINATIONS BY MUNICIPALITY

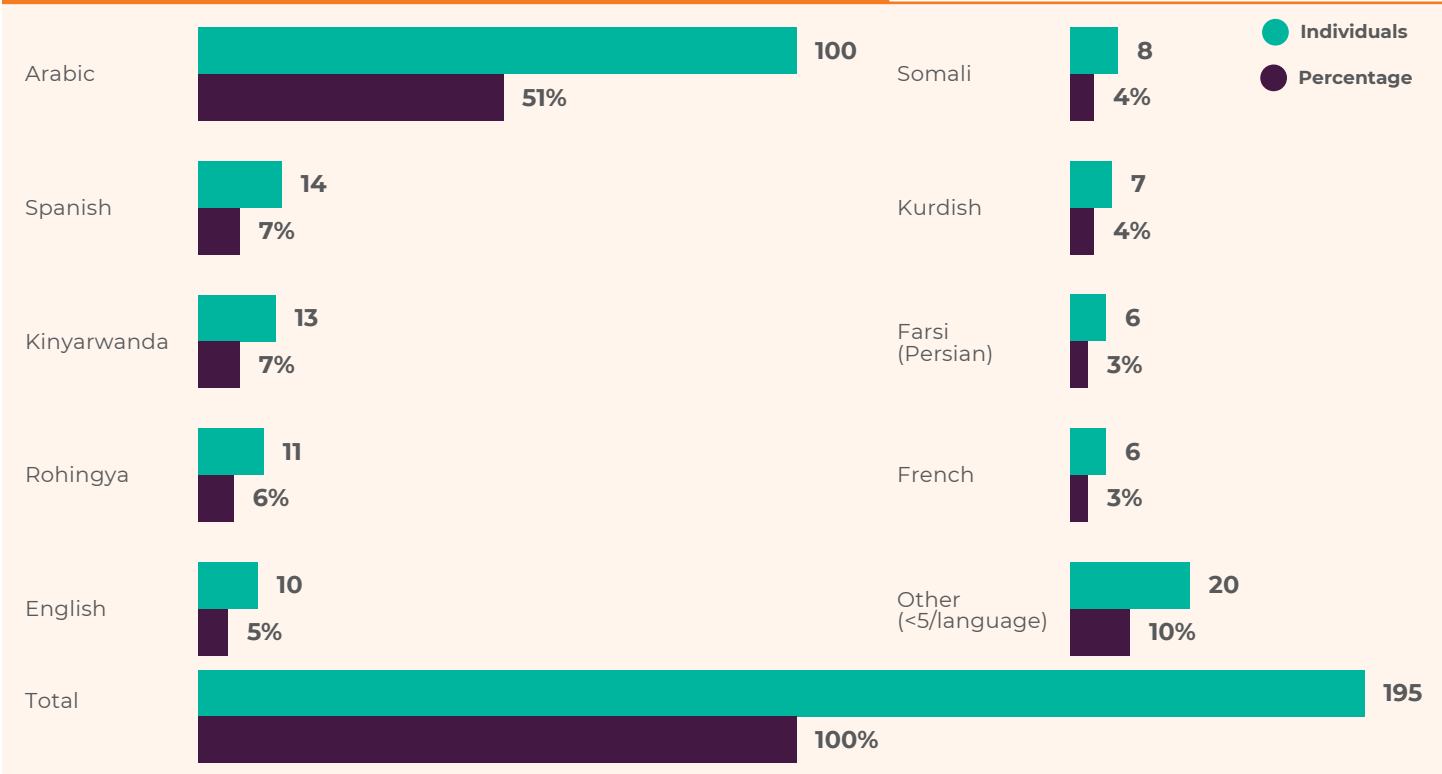


TOP 5 LANGUAGES SPOKEN



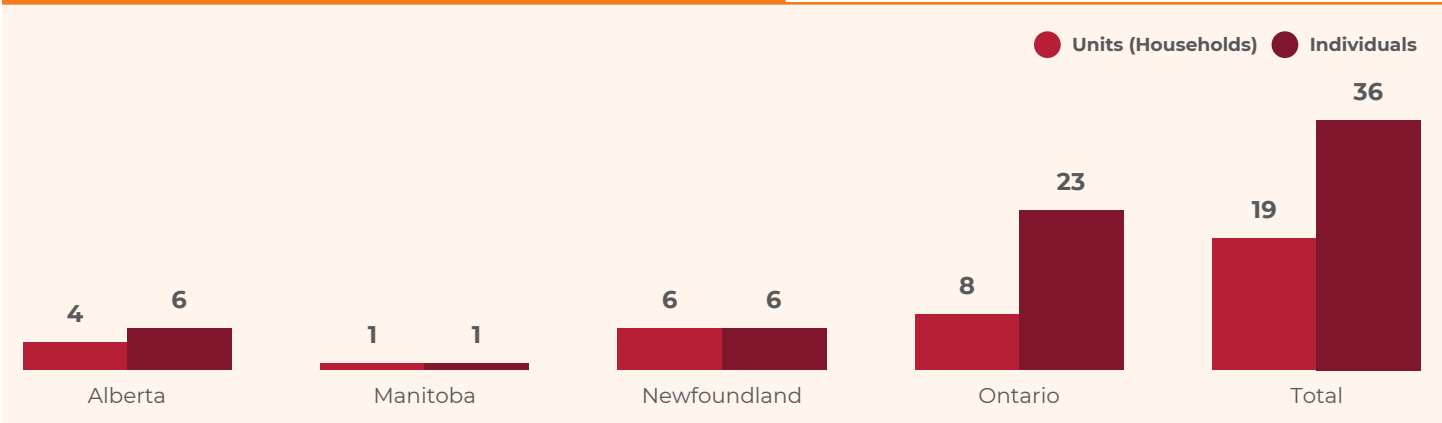
Arabic was the dominant language this quarter, followed by a mix of languages including Spanish, Kinyarwanda, and Rohingya.

ALL LANGUAGES SPOKEN AMONG GAR ARRIVALS



Arabic speakers made up over half of arrivals, alongside a wide range of other languages. This highlights the need to balance targeted language supports with broad interpretation capacity for service providers.

SELF-RELOCATED ORIGINAL DESTINATIONS



Most secondary migrants came from Ontario, with smaller numbers from other provinces. This suggests continued movement toward BC after initial settlement, likely influenced by networks, opportunities and access to services.

SUMMARY OF KEY INSIGHTS

The first quarter of 2026 reflects a shift in both the volume and composition of GAR arrivals to British Columbia. Overall arrivals were lower compared to the previous quarter, aligning with broader trends in Canada's multi-year immigration levels plan and challenges in arranging travel to Canada due to geopolitical crises. At the same time, BC continues to be a destination of choice, as reflected in ongoing secondary migration from other provinces. Arrivals remain predominantly family-based and are increasingly shaped by emerging global crises, particularly in Syria and Sudan. Settlement patterns remain highly concentrated in Surrey, reinforcing ongoing service pressures in specific regions. Together, these trends point to the need for adaptable, responsive settlement systems that can respond to both shifting volumes and evolving client cultural profiles.

REFUGEES: FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL PERSPECTIVES

Refugee resettlement connects global displacement with local support systems. Individuals are identified internationally, often through UNHCR, and resettled through specific programs, such as the Resettlement Assistance Program, in Canada. Once in Canada, local service providers play a critical role in supporting successful integration, offering services that help newcomers navigate housing, healthcare, education, and employment. This connection between global need and local response is central to Canada's approach to refugee protection.

Understanding Resettlement

Resettlement is a targeted humanitarian pathway that enables refugees facing significant vulnerability and protection risks to relocate to another country where they can rebuild their lives in safety and with permanent protection.



Canada's Refugee Program

Canada's refugee system includes several pathways. Each pathway offers different types and levels of financial and settlement support.

Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs)	Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugees (BVORs)	Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs)	Refugee Claimants
<p><i>Supported by the federal government through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)</i></p> <p>GARs are referred by UNHCR or other partners and arrive in Canada with permanent resident status. They receive financial support and immediate settlement services through RAP for up to one year, including assistance with housing and basic needs.</p>	<p><i>Supported jointly by government and private sponsors</i></p> <p>BVORs are also referred internationally and arrive with permanent resident status. Financial support is shared between the government (6 months) and private sponsors (6 months), with additional social and emotional support provided by sponsors.</p>	<p><i>Supported by private sponsors in Canada</i></p> <p>PSRs are supported by private sponsors in Canada, who provide financial and settlement support for up to one year. Like other resettled refugees, they arrive with permanent resident status.</p>	<p><i>Individuals who seek protection after arriving in Canada</i></p> <p>Refugee claimants (asylum seekers) in Canada do not arrive via resettlement programs, are not permanent residents upon arrival, and must have their claims assessed by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). If successful, they become protected persons and can subsequently apply for permanent residence.</p>

From Global to Local in Practice

Across all pathways, refugee resettlement reflects a coordinated effort between international organizations, federal programs, and local service providers. In British Columbia, this translates into community-based support that helps newcomers access housing, services, and opportunities as they begin to rebuild their lives.

While resettlement programs are structured at the national level, the realities of integration are experienced locally. Communities welcoming refugees must respond to immediate needs such as housing availability, access to healthcare and language supports, often within already challenging systems. At the same time, shifting global crises and federal intake levels can create variability in arrival patterns, requiring service providers to remain flexible and responsive. This highlights the importance of coordinated planning, sustainable funding, and strong local partnerships to ensure that global commitments to refugee protection translate into meaningful, long-term outcomes for newcomers.

Additional Resources

For more information, see the [video](#) produced by ISSofBC.

