

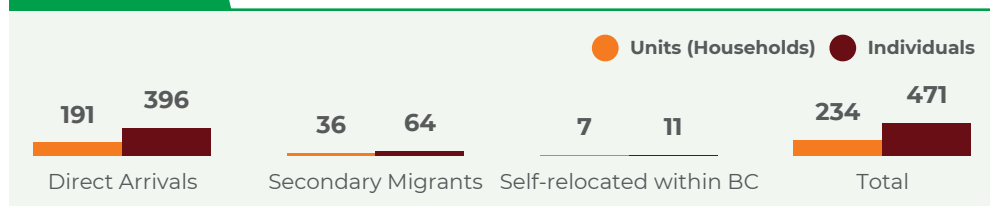


GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEE (GAR) ARRIVALS IN BC | 2026

REPORTING PERIOD: APRIL 1-JUNE 30, 2026

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

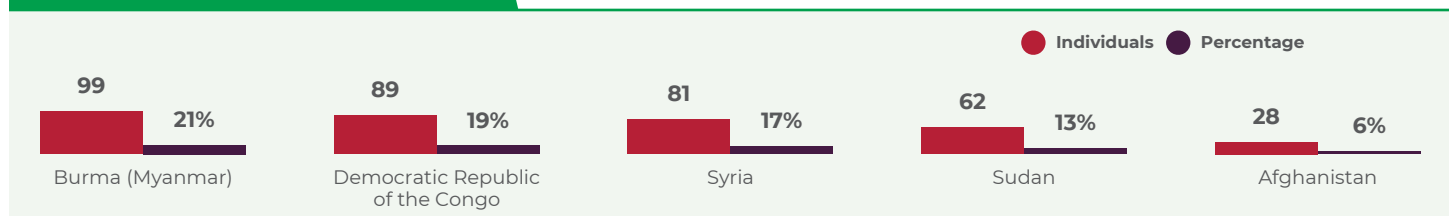
ARRIVALS



The data captures how Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) arrived and moved within BC between April 1 and June 30, 2026. Below is an explanation of each category and what it means for service providers and communities.

- **Direct arrivals** represent GAR families who came directly to BC through the federal Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). A total of 396 GARs (191 households) arrived directly to BC during this quarter, more than doubling the volume recorded in the previous quarter. This increase reflects a significant rise in resettlement activity and places additional demand on local settlement and reception services.
- **Secondary migrants** are GARs who initially settled in another province before relocating to BC. During this quarter, 64 individuals (36 households) moved to BC from elsewhere in Canada. The continued flow of secondary migrants demonstrates BC's ongoing attractiveness as a destination due to established communities, employment opportunities, and access to services.
- **Self-relocated** within BC refers to GARs who moved from one BC community to another after their initial placement. Eleven individuals (7 households) self-relocated within the province during the reporting period, indicating some level of internal mobility as newcomers adjusted their settlement plans and sought communities that better met their needs.

TOP 5 SOURCE COUNTRIES



Arrivals this quarter were led by Burma (Myanmar), the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Syria, which together accounted for more than half of all GAR arrivals. The diversity of source countries reflects both ongoing global displacement situations and Canada's resettlement response across multiple regions. Compared with the previous quarter, arrivals were more evenly distributed across several major refugee-producing countries, resulting in a broader mix of cultural and linguistic backgrounds among newcomers.

IN THIS ISSUE

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

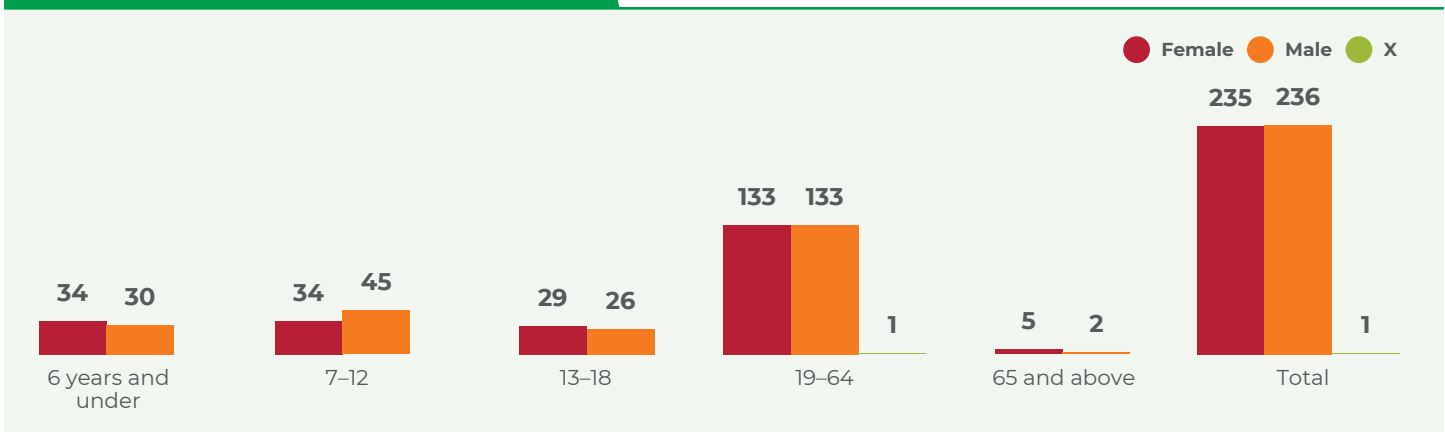
GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEE (GAR)

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.

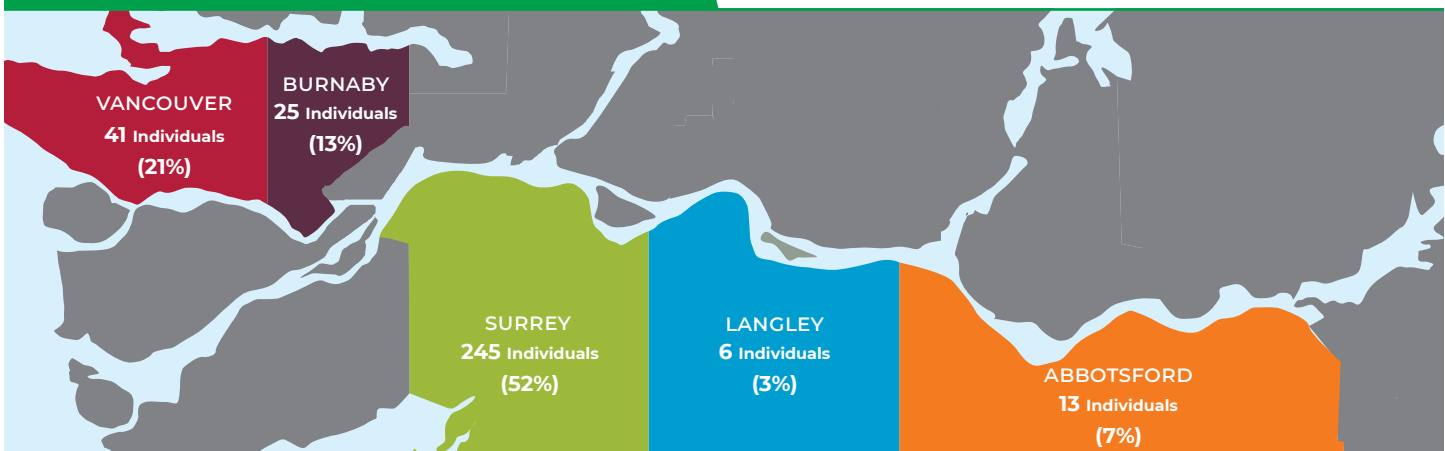
SOURCE: canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship/helpcentre/glossary.html#government_assisted_refugee

AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION



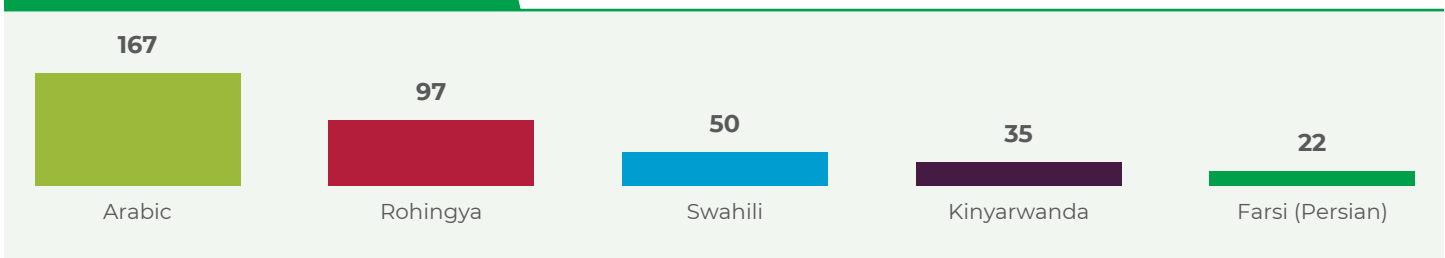
Most arrivals were adults aged 19-64, who represented nearly 58% of all GAR arrivals. Children and youth under 19 accounted for approximately 42% of arrivals, highlighting the continued prevalence of family-based settlement. Gender distribution was virtually balanced, with equal numbers of adult women and men arriving during the quarter. This demographic profile suggests ongoing demand for a range of settlement services, including education supports, childcare, employment services, and family-focused programming.

TOP 5 DESTINATIONS BY MUNICIPALITY



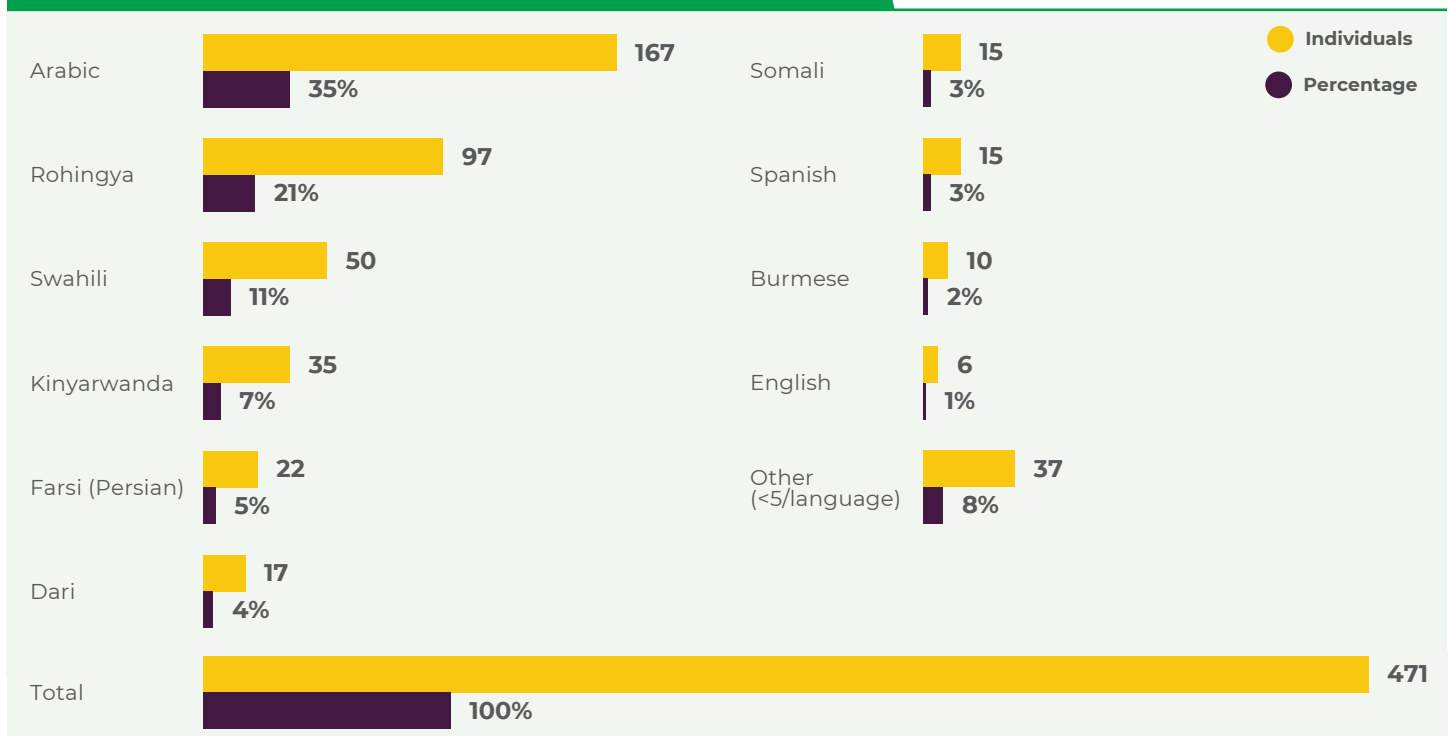
Surrey continued to be the primary destination for GAR arrivals, receiving more than half of all newcomers during the reporting period. Vancouver and Burnaby remained important settlement destinations, while smaller numbers settled in municipalities such as Abbotsford and Langley. The concentration of arrivals in Surrey continues to place significant demands on housing, language services, schools, and community supports in the region.

TOP 5 LANGUAGES SPOKEN



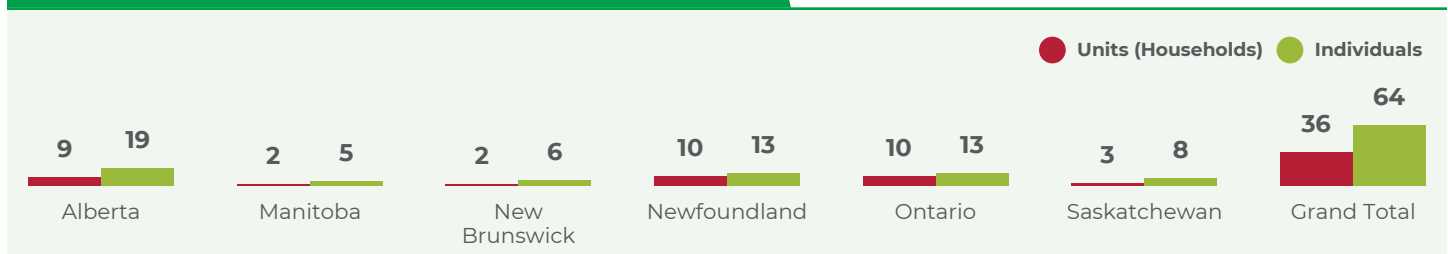
Arabic remained the most commonly spoken language among GAR arrivals, accounting for over one-third of all reported languages. The substantial presence of Rohingya, Swahili, and Kinyarwanda speakers reflects the growing diversity of newcomers arriving from Africa and Southeast Asia. These language trends reinforce the importance of maintaining broad interpretation and language support capacity across settlement and community services.

ALL LANGUAGES SPOKEN AMONG GAR ARRIVALS



While Arabic remained the dominant language, arrivals represented a wide range of linguistic backgrounds. The continued presence of multiple language groups highlights the need for flexible settlement services capable of supporting newcomers from diverse regions and cultures. The growing number of Rohingya, Swahili, and Kinyarwanda speakers may also require specialized language and interpretation resources in some communities.

SELF-RELOCATED ORIGINAL DESTINATIONS



Secondary migrants arrived from a range of provinces, with Alberta, Newfoundland, and Ontario contributing the largest numbers. The continued movement toward BC following initial settlement elsewhere suggests that family networks, employment prospects, and community connections remain important factors influencing relocation decisions.

SUMMARY OF KEY INSIGHTS

The second quarter of 2026 saw a significant increase in Government-Assisted Refugee arrivals to British Columbia, with total arrivals more than doubling compared with the previous quarter. Direct arrivals accounted for the majority of newcomers, while secondary migration from other provinces remained an important contributor to overall settlement numbers.

The profile of arrivals also shifted during the quarter. While Syria and Sudan continued to be major source countries, arrivals from Burma (Myanmar) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo increased substantially, contributing to greater cultural and linguistic diversity among newcomers. Surrey remained the primary destination for arrivals, reinforcing its central role in refugee reception and settlement in British Columbia. Together, these trends highlight the importance of maintaining responsive settlement systems that can adapt to both changing arrival volumes and increasingly diverse newcomer populations.

UNDERSTANDING SECONDARY MIGRATION: WHY REFUGEES MOVE AFTER INITIAL SETTLEMENT

What is Secondary Migration?

Secondary migration refers to the movement of newcomers, including refugees, from their initial community or province of settlement to another location within Canada. While Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) are initially resettled based on available housing and service capacity, some later relocate as they establish themselves and make longer-term decisions about where to live.

Research shows that secondary migration most commonly occurs during the first few years after arrival and is often influenced by employment opportunities, housing affordability, family and social networks, cultural connections, and access to specialized services.

SOURCE: rstp.ca and aaisa.ca



Why Does It Matter?

Understanding secondary migration helps governments, settlement agencies, and communities better anticipate demand for housing, healthcare, education, language training, employment services, and community supports. Because newcomers account for a significant share of Canada's population growth, where they ultimately choose to settle can have important implications for local planning and service delivery.

Secondary migration also highlights that settlement is an ongoing process. While initial placement provides a starting point, subsequent moves often reflect where newcomers believe they can access the strongest opportunities, support networks, and long-term settlement outcomes.

Secondary Migration and British Columbia

British Columbia has historically been one of Canada's most attractive destinations for newcomers and consistently maintains among the country's highest newcomer retention rates. Along with Ontario and Alberta, BC attracts a significant share of interprovincial migrants, reflecting the province's established communities, economic opportunities, and settlement infrastructure.

In the second quarter of 2026, secondary migrants represented approximately 14% of all Government-Assisted Refugee arrivals to British Columbia, demonstrating the continued role of interprovincial mobility in shaping settlement patterns across the province.

Additional Reading

Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP)

[What is Secondary Migration? \(2019\)](#)

Explains secondary migration in the refugee resettlement context, common reasons refugees relocate after arrival, and implications for sponsors and settlement supports.

Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA)

[Beyond Borders: Understanding Newcomer Mobility in Canada \(2025\)](#)

Examines newcomer mobility trends across Canada, factors influencing secondary migration, and the importance of tracking population movement for housing, healthcare, education, labour market planning, and settlement services.