

Employment Programs for Refugee Youth



A PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK

Why is it important to provide employment programs for refugee youth?

Employment programs empower refugee youth, help them to develop important skills, and strengthen the local economy.

Refugees are young and can offset the effects of an aging workforce:

According to the 2021 Census, only 19% of the population in Nova Scotia were under the age of 20 ([Census of Population](#)). For refugees admitted to Nova Scotia between 2015 and 2025, however, nearly half (44%) were under the age of 18 ([Open Government](#)).

Refugees are likely to stay in the region:

For refugees admitted to Nova Scotia in 2016, most (86%) continued to live in the province after five years, compared to only 51% of economic immigrants ([Longitudinal Immigration Database; Statistics Canada](#)).

Workforce inclusion is a pathway to more inclusive communities and improved immigrant retention. Providing a robust system of employment support for all residents of Nova Scotia, and especially for underrepresented and equity-deserving groups, is key to unlocking economic and social prosperity in the province and beyond.

Employment Barriers for Refugee Youth:

- Unfamiliar with Canadian **work culture**
- Lack of Canadian **experience or education**
- Small **social circles**
- Communication and language** barriers
- Shifting **job market demands** and availability

- Knowledge about Canadian employment processes and expectations
- Build resumes with certifications
- Knowledge of safety and rights at work

- Knowledge of local careers and education paths
- Goal-setting skills and practice
- A personalized and flexible career plan

Work Experience & Skills

- Increased self-awareness
- Increased confidence
- More prepared for the future

Clear Goals and Future Plans

Improved Sense of Self

What makes an impactful employment program?

Social Networks

- Mentorship opportunities
- New friendships with other youth
- Improved communication & networking skills
- Mediated relationships and navigation with professional networks

Community Connections

Program Outcomes for Youth

Employment Outcomes

- Permanent employment offers
- Canadian work experience
- Essential skills and certifications
- Pursuit of higher education

Settlement Outcomes

- Social networks
- Increased confidence
- Increased self-awareness
- Preparation for future success
- Increased sense of belonging

- Introduction to community resources
- Community-led education sessions
- Awareness of local opportunities