

KEY FINDINGS FROM SYRIAN GARS DURING THEIR FIRST YEAR IN BC

Some of the key findings from Syrian Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) during their first year in British Columbia indicate that:



- 76%** Seventy-six percent (76%) of Syrian GARs are currently attending a federally funded adult English language class or Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes;
- 51%** Fifty-one percent (51%) of individuals who are not attending LINC classes have been on a waitlist on average of four (4) months;
- 20%** Twenty (20%) of survey respondents indicated that they have taken training and/or education other than English, another indicator towards economic integration;



- 17%** Less than one year after arrival seventeen (17%) of respondents are employed on a full-time or part-time basis;
- 59%** Manufacturing, Construction and Trades [fifty-nine percent (59%)] and Food, Retail and Hospitality [thirty-one percent (31%)] are the two main sectors in which Syrian respondents have found employment;
- 64%** Sixty-four percent (64%) of respondents who are not working stated that they were actively looking for work;



- 16%** When asked about their family's emotional health, sixteen percent (16%) of respondents indicated that, overall, their family members felt depressed and fourteen percent (14%) reported as sad. Treating mental illness and anger issues, especially after living through the ongoing civil war, was identified as a priority during the Syrian Refugee Youth Consultation. The ability to fully rebuild their lives in Canada is tempered by ongoing concern about the well-being of family abroad;
- 55%** Fifty-one (51%) of respondents reported their children were doing excellent or very good in school;
- 66%** Two-thirds, sixty-six (66%) of respondents reported they regularly use the food bank (e.g. on a weekly basis). These are similar findings to the experiences of other low-income British Columbians;



- 62%** Sixty-two (62%) of survey respondents reported that their housing is comfortable for their family. Nonetheless, Syrian families have faced significant challenges in finding affordable housing that meets the needs of their larger families;



- 74%** Almost three-quarters, seventy-four (74%) of survey respondents indicated that they had immediate family members that they wanted to be reunited with in Canada;

85% In an open-ended last question on the survey where Syrians could state anything, over eighty-five percent (85%) simply wanted to say “thank you”.