

SURVEY OF UKRAINIAN IMMIGRANTS IN WASHINGTON STATE

Community Perspectives and Needs



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Abbreviations/Terms

CBPR: *Community-Based Participatory Research*

CBOs: *Community-Based Organizations*

DPs: *Displaced Persons*

HIPAA: *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act*

PCP: *Primary Care Provider*

PHI: *Protected Health Information*

PR: *Porsesh Policy Research Institute*

QR Code: *Quick Response Code*

SM: *Social Media*

TPS: *Temporary Protected Status*

U4U: *Uniting for Ukraine*

UHP: *Ukrainian Humanitarian Parole*

U.S: *United States*

USSR: *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*

LPR: *Legal Permanent Resident*

Acknowledgements

The research team gratefully acknowledges the 321 Ukrainian community members who generously shared their time, stories, and experiences to make this study possible. Their willingness to participate in community-based research during a period of profound displacement reflects both the resilience of the Ukrainian community and their commitment to improving conditions for those who follow.

We conducted this work on the traditional lands of the Coast Salish peoples including the Duwamish, Suquamish, Snoqualmie, Muckleshoot, and other sovereign nations whose connection to this land continues to the present day. We honor their stewardship of this place and acknowledge that our research on immigrant and refugee communities takes place within a landscape shaped by prior and ongoing displacement.

We thank the Nashi Immigrants Health Board leadership, the research coordination team, the community health navigators whose lived-experiences, case notes and observations enriched our qualitative analysis, and the Porsesh Policy Research Institute team for their methodological, technical, analytical and editorial guidance.

Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a large-scale survey of Ukrainian immigrants residing in Washington State, offering a comprehensive analysis of the facilitators and barriers shaping their immigration and resettlement experiences over the past five years. The survey examines key dimensions of integration, including demographic characteristics, migration pathways, education and professional background, employment, housing stability, financial security, health and well-being, and community engagement.

Respondents are Ukrainian immigrants, predominantly highly educated professionals, who arrived in Washington State following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Most entered the United States through the Ukrainian Humanitarian Parole program (Uniting for Ukraine), which granted a two-year temporary status. That status has since been suspended indefinitely (Ukraine Immigration Task Force, 2025), leaving many participants without a clear or viable pathway to permanent residency and creating barriers to continued employment authorization and state funded health and social service support for resettlement.

Despite these challenges, more than half of respondents are currently employed, though only a small proportion are working in positions aligned with their professional training or credentials. Households average 4 occupants, with most respondents living in rental housing. Access to healthcare remains uneven: while more than half rely on public health insurance, 10% are uninsured, and cost is cited as the primary barrier to accessing care.

Collectively, the data reveal a highly skilled, motivated, and resilient population that is eager to contribute meaningfully to Washington State's economy and integrate. Respondents express strong intentions to work, pay taxes, support their families, and rebuild their professional lives. Yet structural barriers—particularly immigration status uncertainty, credential misalignment, loss or risk to loss of work authorization, and gaps in health insurance coverage—continue to limit respondents' ability to fully participate.

Washington State is uniquely positioned to address these challenges. The findings in this report provide policymakers, employers, healthcare providers, service providers and community organizations with a clear and data-driven understanding of who these residents are, the assets they bring, and the obstacles they face. Coordinated efforts to restore and stabilize work authorization, align professional credentials with licensure and workforce

pathways, and expand access to affordable health insurance and employment in high-need sectors would not only remove existing barriers but convert them into shared opportunities. These individuals are our neighbors, our colleagues, and current contributors to the state's social and economic vitality. This data can be utilized to inform future actions and services.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Context

1.2 The Geopolitical Context: War Displacement, and Forced Migration

Ukrainian immigration to the United States must be understood within a long historical continuum shaped by war, political repression, and economic upheaval. Migration from Ukraine to the United States has occurred in multiple distinct historical waves and this introduction focuses on migration since the late nineteenth century. During this time frame, each wave was prompted by geopolitical rupture and displacement. Early labor migration accelerated in the late 1800s and early 1900s, followed by mass displacement during the First and Second World Wars. In the aftermath of World War II alone, more than 80,000 Ukrainians resettled in the United States as displaced persons (DPs), many of whom had endured prolonged confinement in refugee camps across Austria and Germany before securing international sponsorship (Batalova, 2026).

Despite the trauma of displacement, these early refugee communities demonstrated remarkable resilience. Ukrainian DPs actively preserved language, cultural traditions, historical archives, scientific writing, and artistic expression—even while living in camps and facing uncertain futures. Upon resettlement, they integrated into American society while simultaneously establishing robust community institutions that supported cultural continuity and mutual aid. These patterns of integration and community-building became defining characteristics of Ukrainian diaspora life in the United States (Arolsenarchives,2023).

A subsequent major wave of Ukrainian immigration occurred following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The dissolution of the USSR triggered widespread economic instability and social dislocation, prompting migration motivated by both economic survival and personal security. During this period, the Lautenberg Amendment provided a legal pathway for individuals fleeing religious persecution to seek refuge in the United States. Together, these post-Soviet arrivals expanded and diversified existing diaspora communities

and further solidified Ukrainian presence across several U.S. states, including New York, California, Illinois, and Washington State (Batalova, 2026).

This long history of forced migration provides essential context for understanding the most recent and still-unfolding crisis precipitated by the Russo-Ukrainian War. While the conflict in eastern Ukraine began in 2014, Russia's full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022, marked a dramatic escalation, triggering one of the largest displacement crises in Europe since World War II. Millions of Ukrainians were forced to flee their homes, seeking safety both within Europe and beyond.

In response to this humanitarian emergency, the United States established *Uniting for Ukraine (U4U)*, a special humanitarian parole program requiring private sponsorship for each individual fleeing the conflict. Unlike traditional refugee resettlement pathways, U4U offered temporary protection without an established route to permanent status, placing significant responsibility on civil society networks, sponsors, and local communities.

As of January 2025, the U4U program has been suspended, with no active pathway for new arrivals (Ukraine Immigration Task Force, 2025) Applications and Ukrainian Re-Parole until Further Notice – Ukraine Immigration Task Force, n.d.). For those already present in the United States, the expiration of initial parole periods has introduced severe and compounding challenges: there is no clear route to permanent residency, continued work authorization is uncertain or has already lapsed, and individuals face substantial financial costs associated with reapplying for temporary status to avoid falling out of legal compliance. These structural vulnerabilities frame the lived experiences examined in this report.

1.2 Washington State's Role: A Key Destination for Ukrainian Resettlement

Established diaspora networks have historically shaped patterns of refugee and immigrant resettlement, and the Ukrainian response to the 2022 invasion was no exception. Existing Ukrainian hubs across the United States quickly became primary destinations as displaced individuals sought to reunite with family and integrate within culturally familiar communities. Washington State emerged as one of the most significant resettlement destinations nationwide, welcoming more than 30,511 Ukrainians through the Uniting for Ukraine program. (*DSHS ORIA, 2026*)

Washington's prominence reflects both historical and contemporary factors. The state has a longstanding Ukrainian community rooted in earlier migration waves, including post-war displaced persons and post-Soviet arrivals. Over decades, these communities have developed churches, cultural organizations, mutual aid groups, and professional networks that provided critical infrastructure when the most recent arrivals began to flee the war.

In addition, Washington State has earned a national reputation for policies that support immigrants and refugees, particularly in areas such as healthcare access, worker protections, and language services. The Pacific Northwest's economic diversity, demand for skilled labor, and strong nonprofit ecosystem further positioned the state as a viable and attractive destination. As a result, Washington has become one of the largest Ukrainian diaspora centers in the United States.

The individuals arriving through U4U are a remarkably distinctive demographic. A significant share of this population is highly educated, English-proficient, and economically active. They are working, paying taxes, pursuing educational opportunities for themselves and their children, starting businesses, and forming community-based organizations. Yet, despite their rapid integration and clear intent to build long-term lives in Washington, their ability to do so remains structurally constrained by federal immigration policy.

A large portion of survey respondents included in this study arrived through U4U and are directly affected by these limitations. Public discourse often overlooks their professional backgrounds, employment participation, and civic engagement. This report documents these realities with the aim of shifting the narrative—from one that frames Ukrainians solely as beneficiaries of humanitarian protection to one that recognizes them as emerging contributors whose long-term stability is both achievable and beneficial to the state.



Seattle based Ukrainian folk ensemble Hrai More - founded in 2022

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 A Community-Based Participatory Research Model

This report is grounded in a collaborative, community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach developed through a partnership between **Nashi Immigrants Health Board** and **PORSESH POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE**. The guiding principles of this methodology include equitable partnerships, shared decision making, centering community voices and strengths and integrating research with action.

Nashi Immigrants Health Board is composed of health professionals and community leaders from within Washington's Ukrainian community. Drawing on both professional expertise and lived experience, Nashi played a critical role in shaping the research agenda, ensuring that survey questions reflected actual concerns and needs related to immigration status, healthcare access, employment pathways, and family stability for this cohort of Ukrainian refugees. Nashi leadership ensured the research occurred at the grassroots level and was conducted with cultural humility and trust; Nashi team members and project contributors come from the Ukrainian community and serve as key stakeholders through their professional roles in health services. Collectively, they contributed qualitative insights grounded in lived experience, ensuring that community perspectives meaningfully inform and guide the organization's work.

Porsesh Policy Research Institute as a community centered data and research institute contributed methodological rigor, survey design expertise, data and policy analysis capacity. The institute provided statistical analyses, ensuring data quality, ethical standards, and analytical consistency. Together, the partnership represents a true CBPR model, the community members are active collaborators in defining priorities, interpreting findings, and identifying policy-relevant implications.

This integrated approach strengthens both the credibility and relevance of the data presented. By centering Ukrainian voices while applying rigorous research standards, the study offers stakeholders—including policymakers, employers, healthcare systems, and community organizations—an authentic and evidence-based understanding of the population’s strengths, challenges, and aspirations.

The chapters that follow build on this foundation, examining survey findings in detail and outlining actionable pathways to promote stability, equity, and long-term integration for Ukrainian residents across Washington State.

2.2 Survey Design and Development

2.2.1 Creation and Piloting of the Ukrainian Community Survey

This survey employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data. It was built upon the framework of a previous survey of Afghan immigrants in Washington State, which the research team adapted and contextualized for Ukrainian immigrants in the same region. To ensure the study was grounded in relevant and contextualized literature, a comprehensive review was conducted, supplemented by input from community leaders and members.

A draft survey was developed encompassing social determinants of refugee resettlement and integration relevant in current literature. The draft was then piloted with three independent community members, and their feedback informed subsequent revisions. This iterative process continued until the team reached consensus on a comprehensive final survey.

2.2.2 Translations

Bilingual team members fluent in Ukrainian and Russian, translated the original survey into both languages spoken by the target community. Translated versions were cross reviewed by additional team members to ensure clarity and shared understanding, and any necessary edits were incorporated.

2.2.3 Upload to Kobo Toolbox

Once finalized Ukrainian and Russian versions were verified, two team members entered both surveys into Kobo Toolbox and configured branching logic to ensure all responses could be captured appropriately.

2.3 Survey Distribution and Data Collection

Based on the hard-to-reach, vulnerable target population of Ukrainian immigrants within Washington State who arrived within the past 5 years, the study used a multi-stage nonprobability convenience sampling approach with snowball recruitment. Participants were first recruited through a social media (SM) campaign, which included a QR code linking to the survey on community platforms. These initial participants then shared the survey with others, and Nashi team members in community-facing roles also helped distribute it. This recruitment process generated a snowball sampling effect and continued until the target sample size of 300 responses was reached. A total of 321 Ukrainian immigrants within Washington state, who met inclusion criteria and consented to participate, completed the survey. Participants resided in multiple areas across Washington State, with the greatest concentration in western Washington, particularly in King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties, and smaller numbers from surrounding suburban and rural areas.

Community announcements were issued to invite participation, and respondents were offered an optional gift card to compensate for their time. Surveys were distributed via a unique virtual link, accessible through a QR code or hyperlink, and all responses were collected anonymously. Email collection was optional and required only for those wishing to receive a gift card. Per survey instructions, respondents had full agency to skip any questions of their choice, with the exception of informed consent validation. However if email was not submitted, gift cards could not be issued.

Respondents with limited technology experience were offered the opportunity to complete the survey on an iPad at a community event, with the same anonymity and privacy measures in place. A small number of participants completed the survey alongside a team member to accommodate hearing, vision, reading challenges.

Email addresses submitted by respondents were separated from survey responses and logged in a secure spreadsheet. The research coordinator then contacted each participant individually with a gift card link and a personalized thank-you message.

Survey distribution and collection spanned from September 2025 through January 2026 and continued until the target of 300 responses was reached; a total of 321 surveys were ultimately collected. At that point, distribution ceased and all survey links were deactivated. No additional responses were collected after this point.

2.4 Analysis

2.4.1 Key data terminology:

- **Quantitative:** data obtained from the survey results that can be described, categorized, ranked or analyzed through counts or numerical means. (Examples: Age, marital status, reported job satisfaction on a numerical scale)
- **Qualitative:** data obtained from open-ended survey responses that were then collated by identifying patterns and themes in an iterative analysis process
- **Community insights or contextual knowledge:** information obtained through discussion and input from the professional expertise and lived experience of Nashi's community health navigators and community members.
- **Literature:** evidence from other studies and sources, outside of the work of Nashi Immigrants Health Board and Porsesh Policy Research Institute for this study.

2.4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis:

The survey data was collected via KoboToolbox and processed using a reproducible R-based data cleaning pipeline. The study team used the coding language R to conduct a descriptive analysis and preliminary correlation analysis of available quantitative and categorical data. The final analytical dataset includes 295 respondents who provided informed consent, met the age eligibility criterion (18+), and completed the core survey questions. A total of 26 records were excluded: 9 near-empty or test records, 6 consent issues (3 refusals and 3 submissions with no consent recorded), and 11 records with age validation issues (10 minors under 18 and 1 impossible age entry).

2.4.2 Inferential Analysis: Justification for Prevalence Ratios

Inferential analysis of employment dissatisfaction utilized a multivariate Poisson regression to estimate Prevalence Ratios (PRs) directly, rather than using the standard Binary Logistic Regression which estimates Odds Ratios (ORs). This methodological choice was essential because the outcome of interest—employment dissatisfaction—is a common outcome in this cross-sectional study, with a prevalence of approximately 30–50%.

2.4.3 Qualitative Data Analysis

To ensure a rigorous and transparent analysis of the 295 survey responses, the following manual qualitative process was conducted:

Step 1: Data Preparation and Isolation

All open-ended survey responses were reviewed and isolated from the raw Kobo Toolbox data. These responses were then transferred to a separate, dedicated database to allow for focused analysis without the interference of quantitative variables.

Step 2: Data Familiarization

A comprehensive review was conducted by reading through every individual response across all seven key sections. This step was vital to gain an initial understanding of the respondent's tone, context, and the breadth of experiences reported by the participants.

Step 3: Initial Coding and Labeling

Labels were assigned to specific snippets of text that highlighted recurring ideas, specific barriers, or professional assets. For example, mentions of "6-month waits for specialists" were coded under Healthcare Accessibility, while mentions of "MD/PhD degrees" were coded under Professional Human Capital.

Step 4: Thematic Development and Categorization

Similar codes were grouped into broader categories to identify consistent patterns across the 295 participants. We specifically looked for "cluster themes"—such as the disconnect between high Ukrainian qualifications and entry-level U.S. employment—to understand the systemic nature of the challenges described.

Step 5: Selection of Anchor Quotes

To provide a "human face" to the data, specific responses that best exemplified each theme were selected as anchor quotes. These quotes were used to illustrate the depth of the barriers and the value of the assets identified in the earlier steps.

Step 6: Final Synthesis and Interpretation

The identified themes were linked back to the original project goal: understanding the assets and barriers to integration for the Ukrainian community. This final interpretation formed the basis of the narrative report, providing actionable insights for service enhancement and policy development.

2.5 Data Dissemination and Protection

To ensure broad dissemination of our research findings, we adopted a multifaceted approach to reach relevant stakeholders. First, we launched the study findings at an event where all stakeholders were invited to participate, learn about community experiences, and explore opportunities for collaboration on key action areas.

Following the launch, we will present a series of presentations for various organizations and entities. Concurrently, we leverage our website and social media channels to share stories and key highlights from the study, maximizing visibility and engagement with the broader community.

Given the sensitivity surrounding immigration, our team implemented a rigorous approach to protecting research participants' data. In line with our commitment to community-centered research, all data are treated as private, confidential, and secure.

During data collection, we used Kobo Humanitarian Toolbox, a secure platform widely adopted in humanitarian contexts. After analysis by our team, all research data are anonymized, encrypted, and stored offline. Identifiable information is never shared with third parties for political or commercial purposes and is deleted immediately after data collection. Datasets are strictly protected, reflecting our priority on the safety, dignity, and privacy of the communities we engage with. Anonymized, non-identifiable data may be used for community-centered or public-interest research to support initiatives that benefit the community and public policy making.

Solidarity in Action

AMERICANS WHO STAND WITH UKRAINE

Join us for a panel discussion with Americans taking real action for Ukraine — from aid and advocacy to frontline support. Hear their stories, learn how U.S. efforts are making a difference, and find ways to get involved.

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Defense Support, former National
Advocacy Coordinator at American
Coalition for Ukraine



HOSTED BY
DAVID KIRSCHENG
American Ukrainian
war journalist and musician



Tamara, Executive Director of Nashi, participated in the "Solidarity in Action: Americans Who Stand With Ukraine" panel at the University of Washington in 2025.



Chapter 3: Results and Discussion

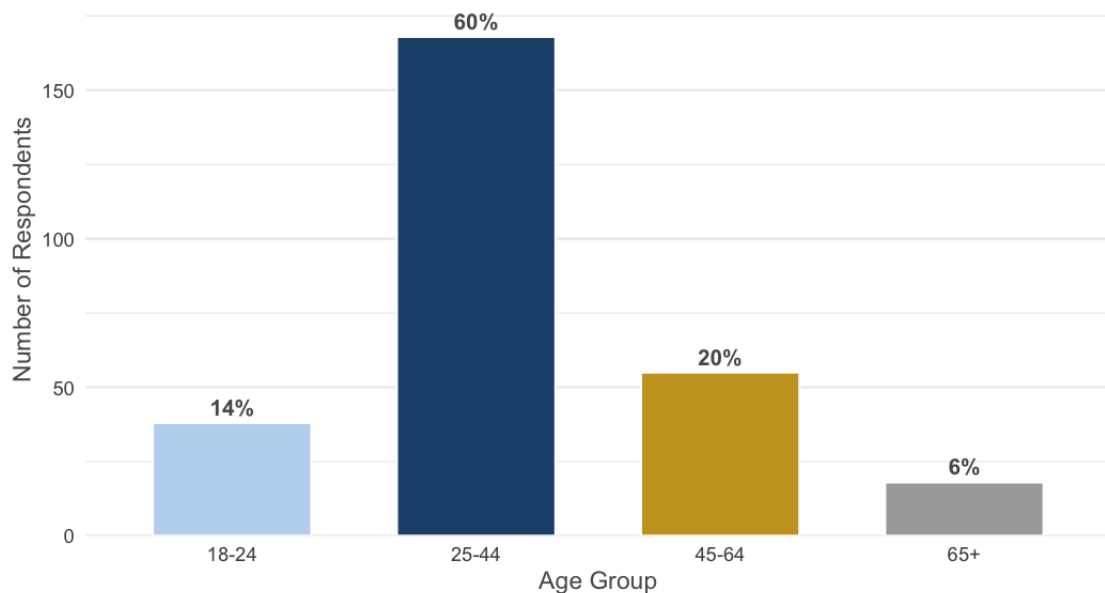
3.1 Demographic Profile

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the 295 survey participants, including age distribution, gender, region of origin within Ukraine, religious affiliation, marital status, and highest level of completed education. Establishing this demographic baseline is essential for contextualizing the resettlement experiences of respondents and for informing state and local service planning tailored to the specific composition of this population.

3.1.1 Age and Gender Composition

Figure 1.1: Age Distribution of Survey Participants

N = 279 (16 missing)



The survey sample is predominantly composed of working-age adults. As shown in **Figure 1.1** and **Table 1**, the largest age group among respondents is 25–44 years, accounting for 168

individuals (60%). Younger adults aged 18–24 make up 14% of the sample (n = 38), while those aged 45–64 represent 20% (n = 55). Older adults aged 65 and over constitute a smaller proportion, with 18 respondents (6.5%). Age data were missing for 16 participants.

The gender distribution of participants is skewed toward women. Female respondents comprise nearly two-thirds of the sample, with 188 individuals (64%), while male respondents total 104 (35%). Three respondents (1%) selected “prefer not to say.” This gender composition reflects the demographic structure of the surveyed group at the time of data collection.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants

Characteristic	N	%
Age Group		
18–24	38	14%
25–44	168	60%
45–64	55	20%
65+	18	6.5%
Gender		
Female	188	64%
Male	104	35%
Prefer not to say	3	1%
Religious Affiliation		
Orthodox Christian	133	45%
Protestant / Pentecostal	90	31%
Catholic	24	8%
Prefer not to say	23	8%
Non-religious	10	3%
Muslim	8	3%
Other / Multiple	7	2%
Marital Status		
Married (together)	167	57%
Single / Never married	78	27%
Divorced	19	7%
Married (separated by distance)	13	4%
Widowed	9	3%

Prefer not to say	7	2%
Highest Education (non-US)		
Bachelor's Degree	92	32%
Technical / Vocational	65	23%
Master's Degree	60	21%
High School	40	14%
Primary School	20	7%
Other	8	3%
Doctoral Degree	3	1%

The demographic data reveal an unusually high percentage of women with children, alongside a minimal presence of men of working age. This is a direct consequence of martial law and the ban on men leaving Ukraine during the start of the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022. (UN Women, 2022) Community insights indicate that women were fulfilling the roles of both parents without a partner, juggling adaptation to a new environment, caring for children, and anxiety about the men left behind in the combat zone. This created a specific need for psychological support and assistance with daily living logistics.

The data also reveal many dependents among the arrivals. A large proportion of respondents (45%, n = 132) indicated there were either one or two children in their current household, with a mean number of children of 2 per household across the whole sample. However, this number varies among the population. Nearly 22% of respondents indicated no children in their household, while a handful of respondents reported 6 children in their current household.

3.1.2 Religious Affiliation

Respondents reported a range of religious affiliations. Orthodox Christianity is the most frequently identified affiliation, reported by 133 respondents (45%). Protestant and Pentecostal traditions together represent the second-largest religious grouping, with 90 respondents (31%). Smaller proportions identified as Catholic (8%, n = 24), Muslim (3%, n = 8), or non-religious (3%, n = 10). Seven respondents (2%) reported other or multiple affiliations. A notable number of participants, 23 respondents (8%), chose not to disclose

their religious affiliation. Overall, the data indicate religious diversity within the sample, with a concentration among Christian denominations.

According to community insights and contextual knowledge, the community is deeply anchored in faith networks. Given the historical role of faith-based organizations in the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) private sponsorship model, this high rate of religious affiliation suggests that local churches may be serving as critical hubs for resource sharing, social cohesion, and initial resettlement support.

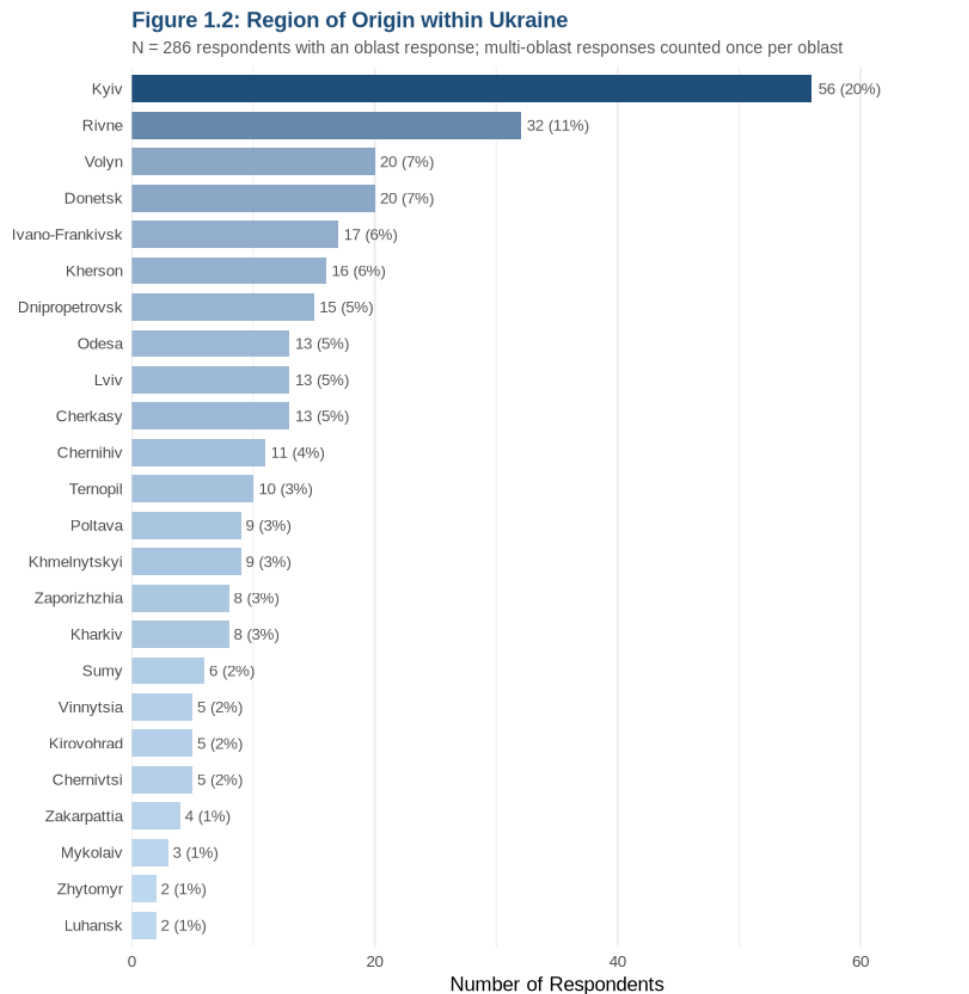
3.1.3 Marital Status

Marital status responses indicate that a majority of participants are married. More than half of respondents (57%, n = 167) reported being married and residing together with their spouse. An additional 4% (n = 13) reported being married but separated by distance. Single or never-married individuals constitute 27% of the sample (n = 78). Smaller proportions reported being divorced (7%, n = 19), widowed (3%, n = 9). Seven respondents (2%) selected “prefer not to say,” and marital status data were missing for one participant. This distribution reflects a variety of household and family structures within the survey population.

3.1.4 Educational Attainment

Participants reported relatively high levels of educational attainment completed outside the United States. Nearly one-third of respondents (32%, n = 92) reported holding a bachelor’s degree, while 21% (n = 60) reported a master’s degree. Doctoral degrees were reported by three respondents (1%). Technical or vocational education was reported by 65 participants (23%), indicating a substantial presence of trade- or skill-based training. Fourteen percent of respondents (n = 40) reported completing high school as their highest level of education, while 7% (n = 20) reported primary school education. Eight respondents (3%) selected “other,” and educational data were missing for seven participants. Overall, the educational profile demonstrates a broad range of academic and technical backgrounds.

3.1.5 Region of Origin within Ukraine



**Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding and missing data.*

Survey respondents represent a geographically diverse sample, indicating that the surveyed population reflects displacement from across Ukraine rather than a single concentrated area. As illustrated in Figure 1.2, among the 286 respondents who provided a region of origin, the most frequently reported oblast is Kyiv, cited by 56 individuals (20%). Rivne Oblast is the second most commonly reported region, representing 11% of the sample (n = 32), followed by Volyn and Donetsk Oblasts, which each account for 7% (n = 20). The remaining respondents are broadly distributed across other regions, including Ivano-Frankivsk (6%, n = 17), Kherson (6%, n = 16), and Dnipropetrovsk (5%, n = 15). This wide regional representation suggests that the surveyed population reflects displacement from across the country rather than concentration from a single area.

3.1.6 Summary

In summary, the demographic profile of the 295 survey participants is characterized by a predominantly working-age adult population, a higher proportion of women than men, diverse regional origins across Ukraine, and varied religious affiliations with a concentration in Orthodox and Protestant traditions. Most respondents are married, and the sample demonstrates relatively high educational attainment, including substantial representation of bachelor's, master's, and technical or vocational credentials. Together, these characteristics provide an essential descriptive baseline for understanding the population examined in this study and for informing subsequent analysis of resettlement experiences, service needs, and policy implications.

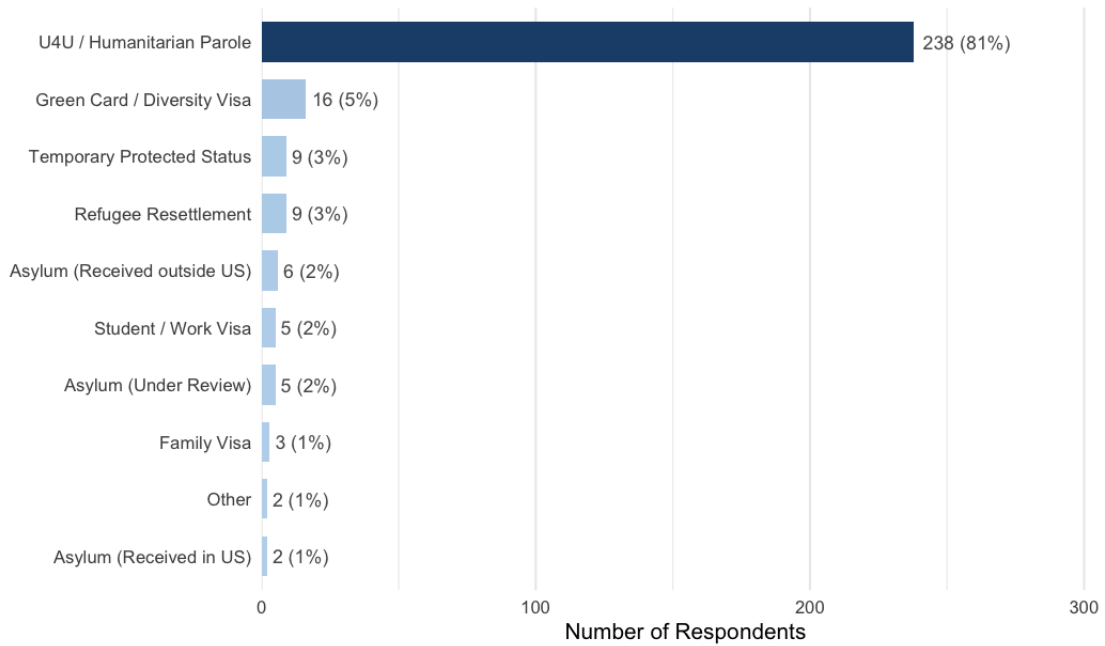
3. 2 Immigration Journey

3.2.1 Arrival Pathways and the Dominance of U4U

The migration trajectory of this cohort is overwhelmingly defined by a legal pathway requiring private sponsorship. According to the survey data shown in **Figure 2.1**, 81% of respondents entered the United States through the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) humanitarian parole program. This temporary parole status established after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, was the pathway for the majority of survey respondents. This pathway required a private sponsor, extensive vetting and health screening requirements and was not established as a pathway to US citizenship. Only a small fraction entered through traditional, permanent pathways such as Green Card/Diversity Visas (5%) or the formal U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (3%).

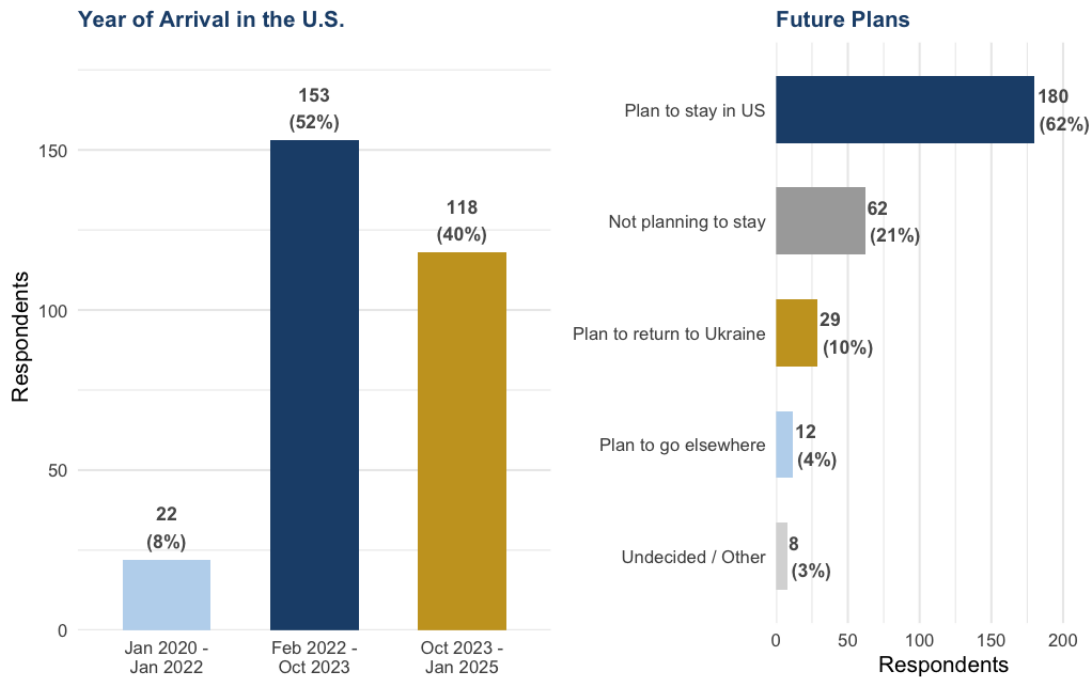
Figure 2.1: Primary Legal Pathway to U.S. Entry

N = 295 respondents with valid responses



The arrival timeline data shown in **Figure 2.2** reflects sustained displacement well beyond the initial outbreak of the war. While just over half the respondents (52%, n=153) arrived during the immediate post-invasion window between February 2022 and October 2023, a significant portion (40%, n=118) arrived more recently, between October 2023 and January 2025. This indicates that Washington State has not merely absorbed a single, historical wave of migration, but has been actively receiving newcomers up until the suspension of the U4U program in early 2025. Consequently, 63% of the community has been in Washington State for one to three years, placing the majority squarely in the critical early-to-middle stages of the resettlement and integration process.

Figure 2.2: Arrival Timeline and Future Plans



3.2.2 Current Status and the "Refugee" Confusion

When reporting their current immigration status, the data in **Table 2** highlights a critical divergence between lived experience and legal reality. While 51% (n=148) accurately report their current status as Parolees (U4U/UHP) and 12% (n=34) as holding Temporary Protected Status (TPS), a notable 21% self-identify their current status as "Refugee". Given that only 3% entered through formal refugee resettlement, this 21% figure likely represents a sociological conflation rather than a legal adjustment. Community members naturally identify with the social and international definition of a "refugee", having been forced to flee an armed conflict, even though the U.S. government classifies them as temporary parolees. For policymakers, this highlights a critical vulnerability: community members may mistakenly believe they possess the long-term legal protections and resettlement benefits afforded to formal refugees, when in fact they hold a precarious, temporary status.

Table 2 Immigration Journey Characteristics (N=295)

Characteristic	N	%
Entry Pathway		
U4U / Humanitarian Parole	238	81%
Green Card / Diversity Visa	16	5%
Asylum (Under Review)	12	4%
Refugee Resettlement	9	3%
Temporary Protected Status	9	3%
Asylum (Received outside US)	6	2%
Student / Work Visa	5	2%
Asylum (Received in US)	2	1%
Other	1	0%
Year of Arrival		
Jan 2020 – Jan 2022	22	8%
Feb 2022 – Oct 2023	153	52%
Oct 2023 – Jan 2025	118	40%
Time in Washington State		
Less than 1 year	19	7%
1–3 years	181	63%
3–5 years	89	31%
Current Immigration Status		
Parolee (U4U/UHP)	148	51%
Refugee	61	21%
Temporary Protected Status	34	12%
LPR / Green Card	23	8%
Asylum (In Process)	17	6%
Asylee	9	3%
Other	10	3%
Future Plans		
Plan to stay in US	180	62%
Not planning to stay	62	21%
Plan to return to Ukraine	29	10%
Plan to go elsewhere	12	4%
Undecided / Other	8	3%

3.2.3 The "Legal Cliff" vs. Settlement Intentions

The most pressing policy crisis revealed in this section is the stark contradiction between the community’s temporary legal footing and their long-term settlement goals. Despite the suspension of the U4U program and the lack of a route to permanent residency, as shown in **Figure 2.2**, a clear majority of respondents (62%) plan to stay in the United States permanently. Out of the remaining 38% of respondents, 10% reported planning to return to Ukraine specifically, another 25% reported not planning to stay in the US or planning to go elsewhere, and 3% are undecided.

This discrepancy creates a looming "legal cliff."(IRC, 2026) With nearly 60% of the population holding either Humanitarian Parole or TPS (both of which require continuous,

costly re-application filings to maintain work authorization and legal presence), the community is trapped in an agonizing state of legal limbo. (LIRS, 2026). This legal precariousness threatens to dismantle the economic and social integration these individuals have already achieved in Washington State.

3.2.4 The Lived Experience of Legal Precariousness

Multiple challenges related to legal status, right to remain in the United States, authorization to work and eligibility to receive supportive health and social services have had a profound effect on Ukrainians and that is also reflected in our study population. (Ukraine Immigration Task Force, 2026).

Qualitative thematic analysis strongly reinforces the profound psychological and financial toll of this legal limbo. Community members describe the suspension of the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) program and the temporary nature of their status as sources of severe compounding stress. Families report substantial financial burdens associated with the required re-application filings needed to preserve their legal presence in the U.S. This bureaucratic hurdle is not merely an administrative inconvenience; it actively jeopardizes their livelihoods, with many individuals facing the risk of losing their work authorization or having already lost it. For a population dealing with "crisis migration" and the constant anxiety of having family members, particularly male partners left behind in Ukraine after the declaration of martial law, this added legal precariousness severely exacerbates their mental health burden.

Furthermore, the qualitative data collected through the open-ended survey questions highlights a painful systemic disconnect between the community's long-term resettlement goals and their restrictive legal classification. Thematic findings reveal a highly educated, motivated population that is eager to pay taxes, work in skilled roles, and build permanent, stable lives in Washington State. Many households are explicitly making long-term plans to remain in the U.S., prioritizing the educational and linguistic adaptation of the next generation. Yet, without a clear pathway to permanent residency, this drive to integrate is constantly undermined. Community members are trapped in a psychological paradox: they are expected to achieve economic self-sufficiency and establish roots, while pervasive anxiety about their temporary legal status leaves them fundamentally unsure about their future.

3.2.5 Uniting for Ukraine: Coming to America

Unsurprisingly, 81% of respondents reported U4U as their immigration pathway to the United States, with a mere 3% coming via formal resettlement programs with paths to a more stable immigration status or citizenship. The U4U program has since been halted with no further arrivals through this pathway and those currently in the U.S. have an uncertain future based on this status change. In addition, with the program halted, health and social services have been drastically reduced or eliminated for many, leaving them with much less related to resettlement support and financial survival.

Arrival timeline and trajectory matched the start of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, in February 2022, with 52% arriving during this window, although an additional 40% arrived between October 2023 and the close of the program in January 2025. The data indicate a continuous pattern of displacement and relocation until the close of the program. Additional data on Ukrainian refugee resettlement after this change would provide insight into what the fate is of those who could no longer utilize this program but were facing continuous risks to their lives as the war continues to displace people both internally and abroad.

Upon initial arrival to Washington state within the first wave February 2022, the cohort arriving via U4U, received refugee services that provided an opportunity for support with housing and basic needs, work authorization, state health insurance coverage under medicaid and enrollment for children into the school system. Although there were still many challenges ahead, many of these resources eased the burden. (Stohl, 2022)

As people continued to arrive (an additional wave after October 2023), many faced additional challenges as original U4U status and support was nearing the end of the term for some and they needed to either reparole or seek Temporary Protected Status (TPS), and others were coming through the same pathway, but benefits, such as medicaid and specific state funded refugee services were minimized or restricted. Currently, TPS status for Ukrainians has not been renewed or extended by USCIS, and is set to expire on October 19, 2026, for those currently holding this status. (Ukraine Immigration Task Force, 2026)

Currently people are facing additional barriers to resettlement based on current restrictions and unknown status related to their immigration pathways. The U4U program has been suspended, and future immigration status is unknown for many, as they struggle to file

additional paperwork, pay large fees, maintain their work authorization status in an insecure system and provide stability and security for their families in the face of immigration paperwork scrutiny, raids and deportations. In addition, affirmative asylum and diversity visa programs have also been suspended, jeopardizing any pathways to a more permanent status for this population. (Ukraine Immigration Task Force, 2025)

3.3 Education and Language Skills

This section examines the educational attainment and English language skills of the 295 survey respondents and highlights a critical policy opportunity: a population with substantial pre-migration education and professional training whose economic contribution is constrained primarily by language access barriers. The findings point to a clear mismatch between existing human capital and the structural supports necessary to fully integrate that capital into the U.S. workforce and civic life.

3.3.1 High Educational Attainment Represents Untapped Economic Potential

The survey data reveal a population with notably high levels of educational attainment, technical and vocational skills acquired outside the United States. As shown in **Figure 3.1** and **Table 3**, more than half of respondents (53%) hold college degrees, including 21% with master's degrees and 1% with doctoral credentials. An additional 23% completed technical or vocational education, reflecting a broad range of specialized skills and applied training.

This educational profile underscores the substantial human capital that respondents bring with them upon arrival. However, without targeted support, particularly in credential recognition and language acquisition, much of this capital remains underutilized. The data indicate a need for systems that enable skilled individuals to translate existing talent, education, and expertise into appropriate employment pathways.

Table 3: Education and Language Skills

Characteristic	N	%
Education (non-US)		
Bachelor's Degree	92	32%
Technical / Vocational	65	23%
Master's Degree	60	21%
High School	40	14%
Primary School	20	7%
Other	8	3%
Doctoral Degree	3	1%
English Proficiency		
Basic	89	36%
Intermediate	52	21%
Conversational	80	32%
Fluent	27	11%
English Class Attendance		
Attended classes	200	69%
Did not attend	56	19%
Wanted but could not	33	11%
Other	3	1%
When Began Learning English		
Before arriving in the US	153	52%
After arriving in the US	141	48%

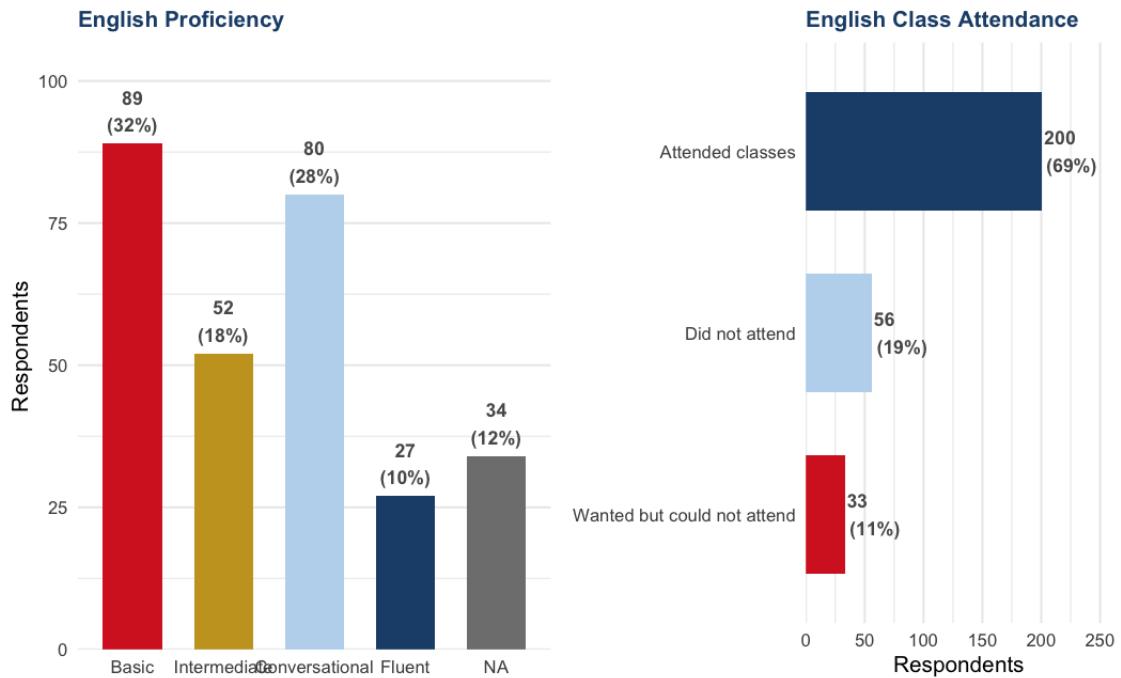
English proficiency data are based on participant self-report.

3.3.2 English Proficiency: A Constraint on Integration

Despite high educational attainment, English proficiency remains a significant barrier for many respondents. More than half (57%; n = 141) self-reported Basic or Intermediate English proficiency, while only 11% describe themselves as Fluent. A further 32% report Conversational proficiency, indicating functional but potentially limited capacity for professional advancement in English-dominant workplaces. English proficiency data are missing for 47 respondents.

The real-world implications of these gaps are evident as 41% of respondents report experiencing language barriers in the workplace. These barriers have direct consequences for job matching, earnings potential, workplace safety, and long-term economic mobility. In effect, limited English proficiency acts as a critical bottleneck, preventing highly educated individuals from contributing at levels aligned with their skills and training.

Figure 3.2: English Proficiency and Class Attendance



3.3.3 Strong Demand for English Instruction and Gaps in Access

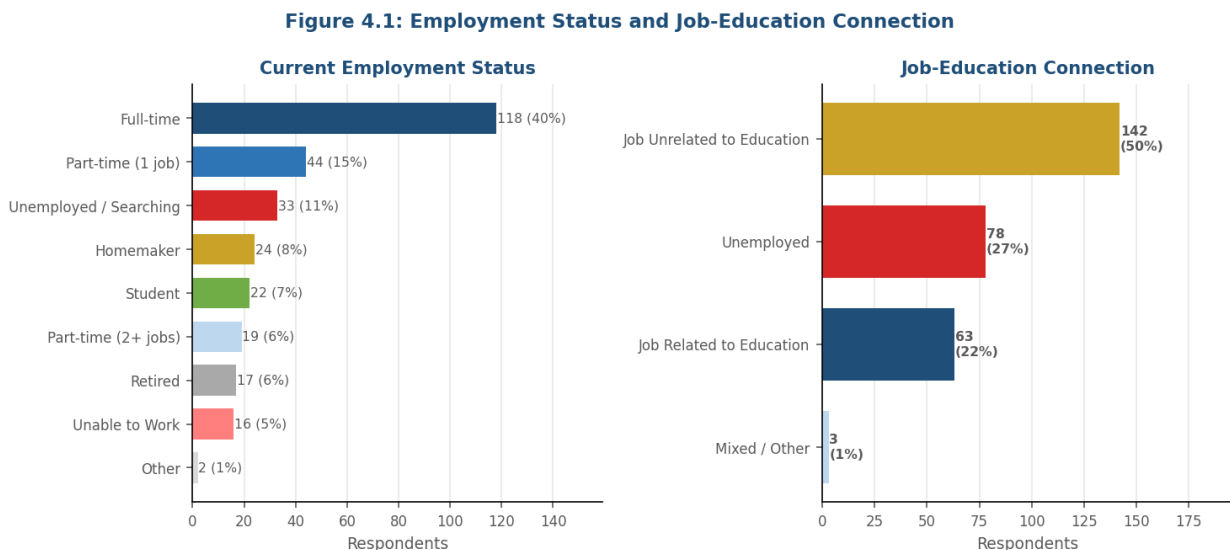
As seen in **Figure 3.2**, the majority of respondents (69%; $n = 200$) have taken proactive steps to improve their English by attending language classes. However, access gaps remain. More than one in ten respondents (11%; $n = 33$) report wanting to attend English classes but being unable to do so. This unmet demand signals a shortfall in the availability, accessibility, or suitability of existing language learning programs.

However, it is notable that respondents' engagement with English began well before arrival for many. Slightly more than half (52%; $n = 153$) began learning English prior to migration, indicating foresight and motivation to prepare for integration. Yet this preparation has not translated into high proficiency for a substantial portion of the sample, reinforcing the need for sustained, post-arrival language support tailored to adult learners, working adults, and professionals.

3.4 Employment Overview

3.4.1 Workforce Participation, Skills Utilization, and Economic Implications

The employment data portray a population that is largely engaged in the workforce and contributing to local, state, and national economies, yet facing persistent barriers to full economic integration. Among the 295 respondents, over half participate in traditional employment, with 40% (n = 118) working full-time and 15% (n = 44) employed part-time. Despite this engagement, a notable share of respondents remains outside stable employment: 11% (n = 33) are unemployed and actively seeking work, and 5% (n = 16) report being unable to work. These values displayed in **Figure 4.1** indicate that while work participation is relatively high, economic security remains uneven.



A defining feature of the employment landscape is the high level of underemployment. Nearly half of respondents, 50% (n = 142), report that their current job is unrelated to their education or professional training. This finding is especially significant given the strong qualifications present within the population. The disconnect between skills and employment opportunities points to systemic mismatches in the labor market and raises concerns regarding long-term career advancement, wage growth, and the inefficient use of human capital.

Job satisfaction levels reflect the consequences of this misalignment. While 32% (n = 95) of respondents report being satisfied with their current position, a larger proportion, 34% (n = 101), express dissatisfaction. Many respondents occupy roles that do not align with their

skills, experience, or career goals, limiting opportunities for advancement and professional fulfillment. However, this pattern must be understood within the broader context of early resettlement. For many individuals, immediate priorities such as securing income, housing, food, and childcare necessitate taking available employment quickly, often before they are able to pursue work aligned with their credentials or invest in longer-term career development.

Importantly, the data confirm that the majority of respondents bring substantial prior experience to the U.S. labor market. Sixty-six percent (66%, n = 194) report having work experience before arriving in the United States, demonstrating that this population is not new to employment but rather navigating challenges related to skill transfer and labor market access. The gap between prior professional backgrounds and current employment outcomes underscores the difficulties of credential recognition, professional licensing, and career re-entry across national contexts.

Table 4 Employment Characteristics and Experiences

Characteristic	N	%
Current Employment Status		
Full-time	118	40%
Part-time (1 job)	44	15%
Part-time (2+ jobs)	19	7%
Unemployed / Searching	33	11%
Unable to Work	16	5%
Homemaker	24	8%
Retired	17	6%
Student	22	8%
Job-Education Connection		
Related to education	63	22%
Unrelated to education	142	50%
Not-applicable	77	27%
Mixed / Other	4	1%
Job Satisfaction		
Satisfied	95	32%
Dissatisfied, planning to change	41	14%
Dissatisfied, not planning to change	60	20%
Not-applicable	85	29%
Other / Missing	14	5%

Table 4: Employment Characteristics and Experiences (N=295)

Taken together, the findings highlight a community with strong economic potential, characterized by high levels of workforce participation, prior professional experience, and skills, yet one whose contributions are limited by systemic barriers. Addressing language

access, improving pathways for credential recognition, and expanding opportunities for skill-aligned employment are critical to supporting economic mobility and realizing the full value of this workforce.

3.4.2 Inferential Analysis: Independent Predictors of Employment Dissatisfaction

To move beyond description and identify which factors independently drive employment dissatisfaction, a multivariate modified Poisson regression was conducted. This method estimates Prevalence Ratios (PRs) directly, adjusting simultaneously for gender, age group, duration in Washington State, immigration status stratum, language barrier, and marital status. The analytic sample comprised 169 respondents with complete data across all model variables, drawn from 200 employed respondents with a defined satisfaction response. Model fit was acceptable (calibration $p = 0.30$) and all Variance Inflation Factors were below 1.10, confirming no multicollinearity.

3.4.3 Skill mismatch and dissatisfaction.

At the descriptive level, dissatisfaction prevalence was nearly identical between those in brain-waste employment (60%) and those in related employment (59%), yielding a crude Prevalence Ratio of 1.03 (95% CI: 0.79–1.35). After adjusting all confounders, the adjusted Prevalence Ratio rose to aPR = 1.17 (95% CI: 0.89–1.55; $p = 0.26$). While this directional increase suggests that confounders were partially masking the brain-waste effect in the unadjusted analysis, the association did not reach statistical significance at the 5% threshold. This finding warrants careful interpretation: the lack of statistical significance does not mean brain-waste is unimportant to this community, but rather that its relationship with dissatisfaction is mediated and shaped by the broader structural environment in which these workers operate.

3.4.4 Language barrier as the dominant predictor.

The strongest independent predictor of employment dissatisfaction was language barrier. Respondents who reported any degree of language barrier had 1.80 times the prevalence of dissatisfaction compared to those without a language barrier (aPR = 1.80; 95% CI: 1.25–2.59; $p = 0.002$), after controlling for all other factors including skill mismatch. This finding confirms that language access is a direct structural barrier that shapes daily work experience, capacity for advancement, and workplace belonging. The effect persisted even among those who were already in mismatched employment, underscoring that language operates as a compounding burden, not merely a pathway into underemployment.

3.4.5 Social isolation and marital status.

Beyond language, social and family structure emerged as a meaningful independent predictor. Respondents who were single, divorced, or widowed with those navigating resettlement without a co-resident partner had 1.39 times the prevalence of dissatisfaction compared to those with a partner present at home (aPR = 1.39; 95% CI: 1.07–1.81; p = 0.014).

Several structural barriers further restrict workforce participation and advancement. Language barriers, reported by 41% of respondents, remain a significant obstacle to both obtaining employment and progressing within it. Combined with limited recognition of foreign credentials and the prevalence of underemployment, these factors constrain access to jobs that reflect respondents' qualifications and experience.

Taken together, the descriptive and inferential findings highlight a community with strong economic potential, characterized by high levels of workforce participation, prior professional experience, and skills, yet one whose contributions are limited by systemic barriers. The regression analysis clarifies the hierarchy of those barriers: language access is the single most actionable predictor of employment dissatisfaction, and social support structures — particularly partnership and family stability — independently shape workers' wellbeing in ways that extend well beyond job placement. Addressing language access, improving pathways for credential recognition, and supporting family-centered integration are all critical to supporting economic mobility and realizing the full value of this workforce.



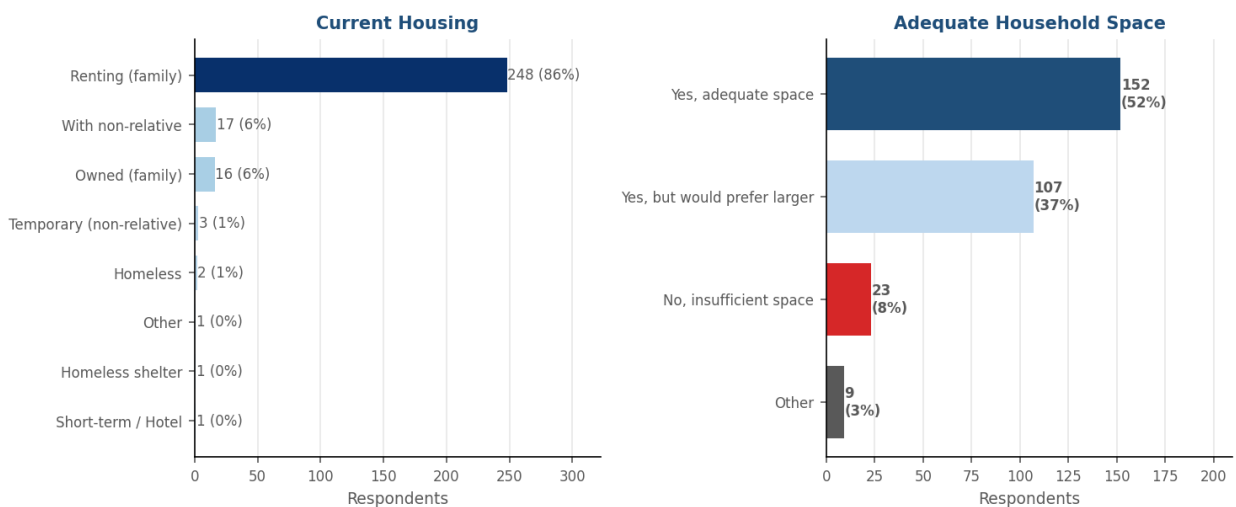
Ukrainian women in their vyshyvankas at World Vyshyvanka Day, University of Washington.

3.5 Housing and Financial Security

This section examines housing conditions, income sources, and overall financial stability of survey respondents, providing insight into the structural and economic challenges faced by recently arrived Ukrainian immigrant households in Washington State. Findings are based on responses from 295 participants.

3.5.1 Housing Stability and Rental Dependency

Figure 5.1: Current Housing and Adequacy of Space

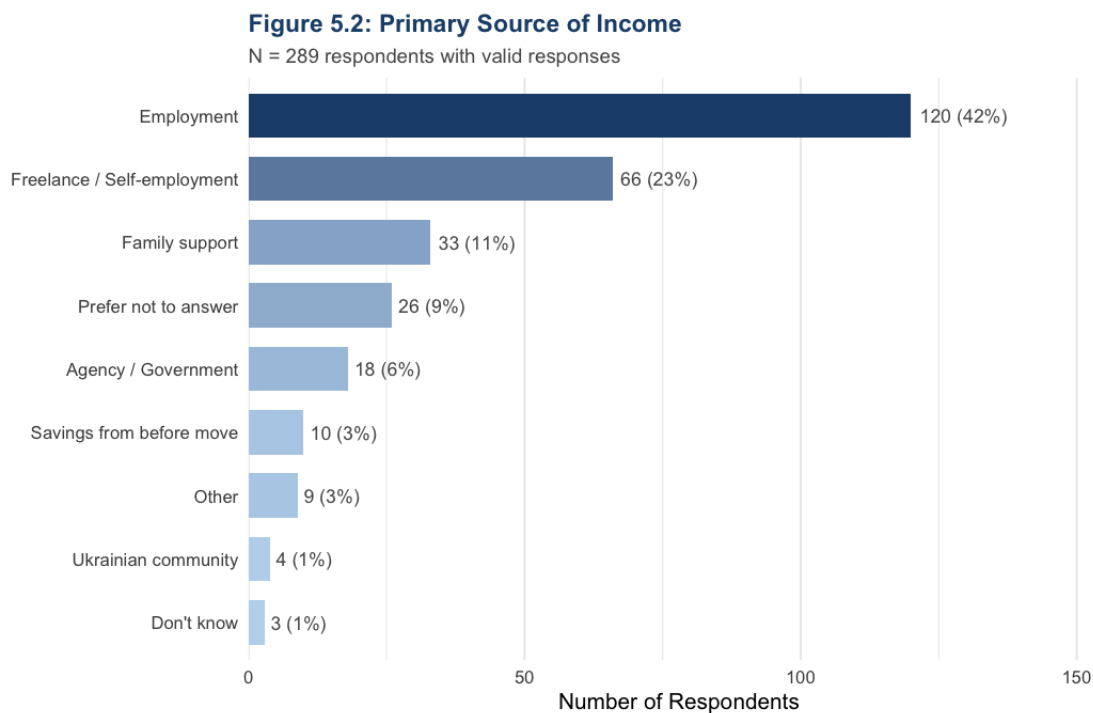


A substantial majority of respondents 86% (n = 248) report that they are currently renting their homes. This high rate of rental dependency is consistent with established patterns among newly arrived immigrant populations, who often encounter significant barriers to long term stable housing and homeownership (Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 2024). These barriers include limited access to credit, the need to establish employment history, and the high cost of purchasing property in Washington State. As a result, renting serves as the primary and often only viable housing option for most households during their initial years of resettlement.

Despite the prevalence of renting, respondents' assessments of their housing adequacy vary. Just over half (52%) indicate that their current living space is adequate for their household's needs. However, 37% express a preference for larger accommodations, suggesting that while their housing may meet basic functional requirements, it does not fully align with their expectations for comfort, privacy, or long-term suitability. Additionally, nearly 8% (n = 23) report that their current housing is insufficient. This insufficiency may reflect overcrowding,

limited bedroom space, or challenges associated with multigenerational or larger family living arrangements, which are common among many immigrant households. Furthermore, the median household size among respondents is 4 people, and given the demographic data collected indicating a large proportion of respondents with 1 or 2 children in the home, we can deduce that many respondents are part of families or are living with several other people, including dependents.

3.5.2 Income Sources and Employment Patterns



Employment is the primary source of income for the majority of respondents, though the distribution of income types highlights the diverse strategies households use to achieve financial stability. Salaried employment supports 42% (n = 120) of respondents, making it the most common income source. Another 23% (n = 66) rely on freelance or self-employment income. This reliance on freelance work may reflect both opportunity and necessity: while it can offer flexibility and immediate earning potential, it may also involve irregular income, limited benefits, and vulnerability to economic fluctuations.

Only about 6% (n = 18) of respondents report relying primarily on agency or government support. This relatively low rate of public assistance use suggests a degree of financial self-sufficiency within the surveyed population. Many households appear to be sustaining

themselves through employment, even when employment is unstable or insufficient to fully meet the high cost of living in the region.

Table 5 Housing and Financial Security

Characteristic	N	%
Current Housing		
Renting (family)	248	86%
With non-relative	17	6%
Owned (family)	16	6%
Temporary (non-relative)	3	1%
Homeless	2	1%
Short-term / Hotel	1	0%
Homeless shelter	1	0%
Other	1	0%
Adequate Space		
Yes, adequate	152	52%
Yes, but prefer larger	107	37%
No, insufficient	23	8%
Other	9	3%
People in Household (Median [IQR])	4 [3, 5]	
Primary Income Source		
Employment	120	42%
Freelance / Self-employment	66	23%
Family support	33	11%
Prefer not to answer	26	9%
Agency / Government	18	6%
Savings from before move	10	3%
Other	9	3%
Ukrainian community	4	1%
Don't know	3	1%

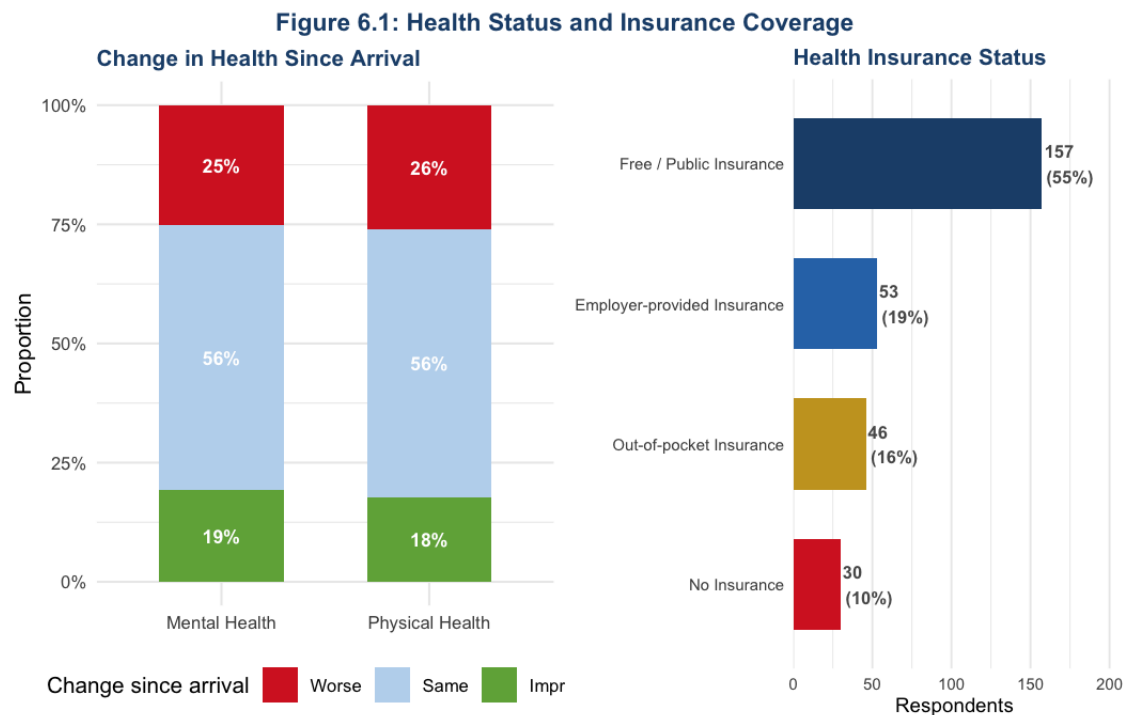
Table 5: Housing and Financial Security (N=295)

3.6 Health and Wellbeing

This section presents an overview of respondents' self-reported health status, healthcare access, and perceived barriers within the U.S. healthcare system. The findings highlight both

areas of relative stability and significant gaps in physical, dental, and mental health support among recently arrived immigrant households.

3.6.1 Self-Reported Health Status



Respondents’ assessments of their overall health reveal a mixed picture of resilience and vulnerability. As shown in **Figure 6.1**, a majority 68% (n = 195), report that their health is satisfactory or good. This suggests that many individuals perceive themselves as maintaining a reasonable level of wellbeing despite the challenges associated with migration and resettlement. This may also reflect the age demographic in which 60% or respondents were between ages 25-44. However, a substantial proportion 32% (n = 90) describe their health as poor or unsatisfactory, in comparison to 4% of all Washington residents reporting poor health in 2024 (CDC, 2024). This elevated rate of poor health compared to the general population may reflect the cumulative physical and psychological impacts of displacement, including exposure to trauma and war, internal displacement, disrupted medical care prior to arrival, and the stressors associated with resettlement and adapting to a new environment ([Anisman et al., 2024](#)).

3.6.2 Health Insurance Coverage

Access to health insurance is a critical determinant of health status, health outcomes, healthcare utilization and financial protection. Among respondents, 90% (n = 256) report having some form of health insurance, including Medicaid or other free coverage, employer-based plans, or insurance purchased independently. While this level of coverage is encouraging, it does not eliminate disparities in access or quality of care. Notably, 10% (n = 30) remain uninsured. For comparison, the Washington State Office of Financial Management found that nearly 5% of all Washington residents were uninsured in 2023, so a higher proportion of survey respondents are uninsured compared to other Washington residents. (Yen, 2023) This uninsured group may face barriers to obtaining timely and preventive care and may be at higher risk for untreated conditions and medical debt.

It is important to remember, however, that many survey respondents who were new arrivals via U4U have since been faced with multiple restrictions that seek to negatively affect their health and well-being, such as:

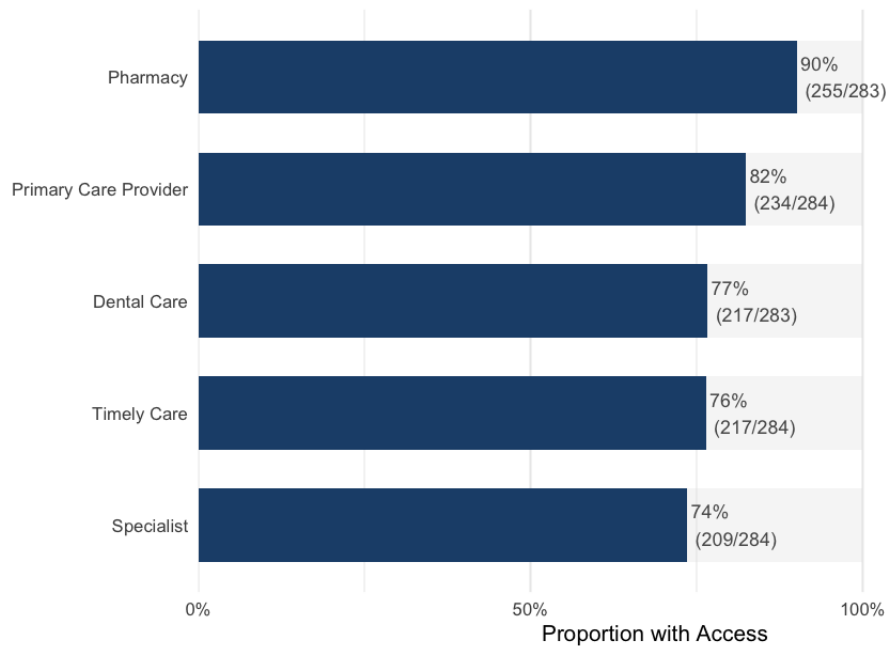
- Restriction from coverage under Medicaid for U4U participants paroled to the USA after September 30, 2024
- Limited or no access to Medicaid health coverage with TPS status
- Increased fees for filing immigration paperwork to protect current status.
- Increased wait times and burden to already overburdened health system
- A lack of access to low-cost prescription medication coverage

3.6.3 Access to Healthcare Providers

Access to healthcare services varies across provider types. A strong majority 82% (n = 234) report having access to a primary care provider (PCP), which is a key indicator of connection to the healthcare system and a foundation for preventive and ongoing care. Access to dental care is similar with 77% (n = 217) reporting availability, although the differentiation between preventive and emergency care was not specified. Specialist care access was slightly lower, with 74% (n = 209) indicating they can obtain specialty services when needed. A substantial 90% (n = 255) of respondents reported ability to access a pharmacy, but survey data does not provide detail about if or how pharmacies are used as a health care access point by respondents. Since 55% of respondents reported obtaining free/public health insurance coverage, the data regarding dental and specialty care would also reflect access to those via state sponsored systems. However, this coverage is precarious.

Figure 6.2: Proportion with Access to Healthcare Services

Proportion of respondents reporting 'Yes' to having access



3.6.4 Mental Health Service Utilization

Mental health service utilization is notably low relative to the likely level of need. Only 12% (n = 34) of respondents report having seen a mental health provider since arriving in the United States. Given the well-documented psychological impacts of forced displacement, including trauma, grief, anxiety, and chronic stress, this low rate of utilization suggests substantial unmet mental health needs. Barriers may include knowledge deficits, mental health stigma, limited availability of culturally and linguistically appropriate services, lack of awareness of available resources, and challenges navigating the mental healthcare system.

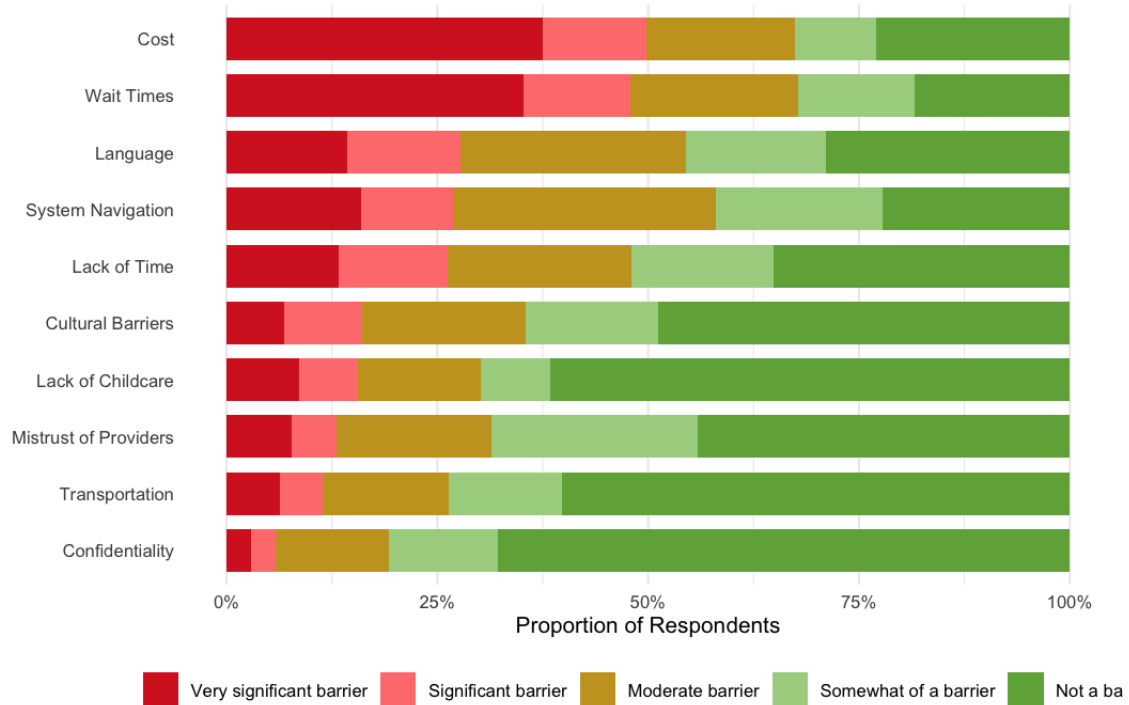
3.6.5 Barriers to Navigating the Healthcare System

Respondents report significant challenges in navigating the U.S. healthcare system, as shown in **Figure 6.3**. Nearly one-quarter of respondents (23%, n = 68) indicate that they experienced significant or very significant difficulty understanding or accessing the system. These challenges may stem from complex insurance structures, unfamiliar appointment processes, limited interpretation services, and difficulty understanding medical terminology. Additionally, 13% (n = 38) report significant cultural barriers to accessing care. Cultural

barriers may include differing beliefs about illness and treatment, discomfort with certain types of care, or mistrust of institutions based on past historical contexts and experiences.

Figure 6.3: Severity of Barriers to Healthcare Access

Stacked bars show distribution of barrier severity ratings



These barriers are well documented in the literature, but speak to the difficulty newcomers experience within the health care system. Refugee resettlement funding has often included support for health care navigation services, providing navigators from the target community who provide both culturally and linguistically responsive services, bridge service gaps, promote health equity and overall cost savings. This is an essential resource for immigrants and refugees to help them navigate a health care system very different from their home country. Community insights and contextual knowledge from Nashi community navigators and community engagement identified some of the biggest barriers to health care access, including misunderstanding of co-payments, deductibles, and other fees associated with health insurance maintenance, network provider selection and required referrals for specialty services. Furthermore, funding for health care system navigation services has become increasingly restrictive based on current policies, exacerbating barriers to care.

Table 6 Health Status and Access to Care

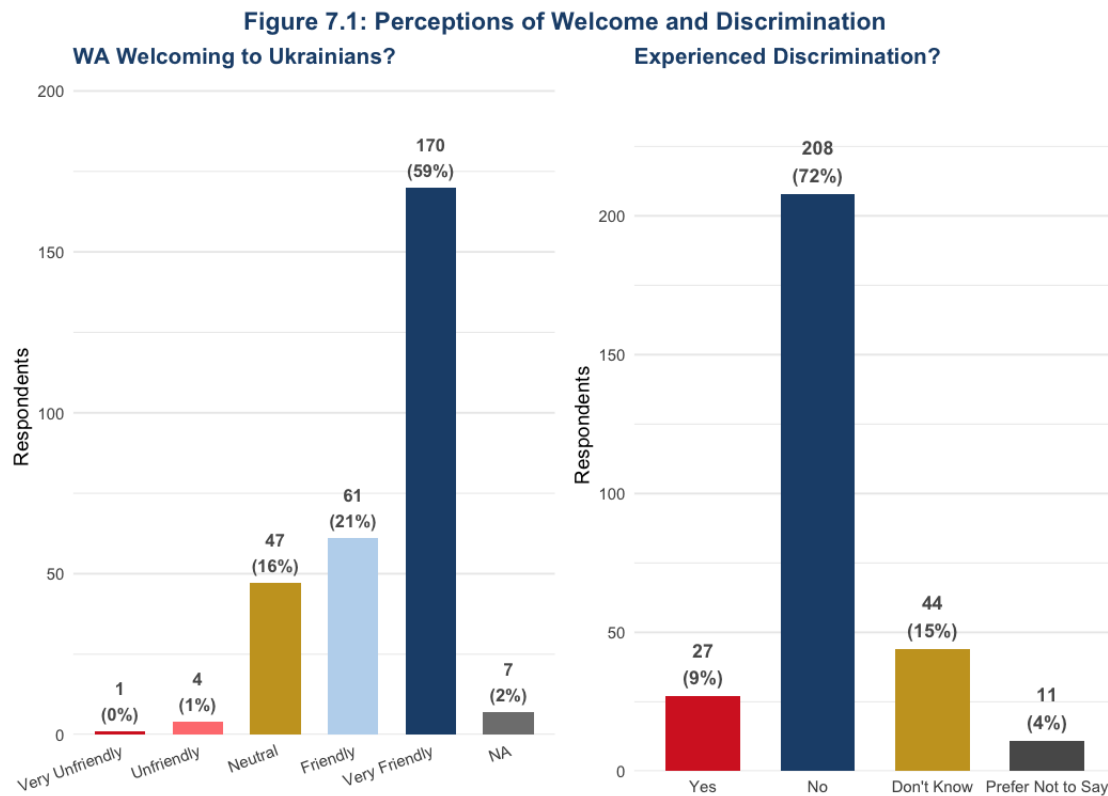
Characteristic	N	%
Overall Health Satisfaction		
Satisfied	195	68%
Not Satisfied	90	32%
Change in Physical Health		
Improved	49	17%
Same	155	54%
Worse	72	25%
Change in Mental Health		
Improved	49	17%
Same	141	49%
Worse	64	22%
Sought Mental Health Care Since Arrival		
Yes	34	12%
No	255	88%
Health Insurance Status		
Free / Public Insurance	157	55%
Employer-provided Insurance	53	19%
Out-of-pocket Insurance	46	16%
No Insurance	30	10%
Access to Healthcare Services		
Primary Care Provider	234	82%
Specialist	209	74%
Dental Care	217	77%
Pharmacy	255	90%
Timely Medical Care	217	76%

Table 6: Health Status and Access to Care (N=295)

3.7 Integration and Community Belonging

This section reports on Ukrainian survey participants’ experiences of integration and belonging in Washington State, with attention to perceptions of welcome, experiences of discrimination, emotional security, and aspirations for long-term inclusion. For the context of this report, integration is conceptualized as a multidimensional process involving social inclusion, legal stability, cultural adaptation, and civic participation. Understanding these dimensions is critical for designing effective programs that promote stability, resilience, and long-term community cohesion among forcibly displaced individuals.

3.7.1 Perceptions of Welcome and Discrimination



Survey findings indicate that Washington State is widely perceived as welcoming. As seen in **Figure 7.1**, more than four out of five respondents (80%, n = 231) described the state as friendly or very friendly toward Ukrainian immigrants, suggesting a broadly supportive host environment. Only a small proportion (2%, n = 5) characterized the state as unfriendly, underscoring the generally positive reception at the societal level.

At the same time, a meaningful minority reported experiencing discrimination. Approximately 9% of respondents (n = 27) indicated they had experienced discrimination since arriving in the United States, and an additional 15% (n = 44) were unsure whether their experiences constituted discrimination. While these percentages are relatively low, they represent individuals whose integration trajectories may be significantly disrupted by exclusion, bias, or lack of institutional responsiveness. These findings suggest that positive broad-based attitudes do not fully protect against localized or interpersonal discrimination.

3.7.2 Uncertainty, Legal Status, and Emotional Well-Being

Uncertainty about the future emerged as one of the most salient challenges affecting participants' integration. Among respondents who answered this item, nearly three-quarters

(70%, n = 193) agreed or strongly agreed that they feel unsure about their future. Concerns about legal status were also widespread, with 68% (n = 182) reporting worry about their ability to remain in the United States.

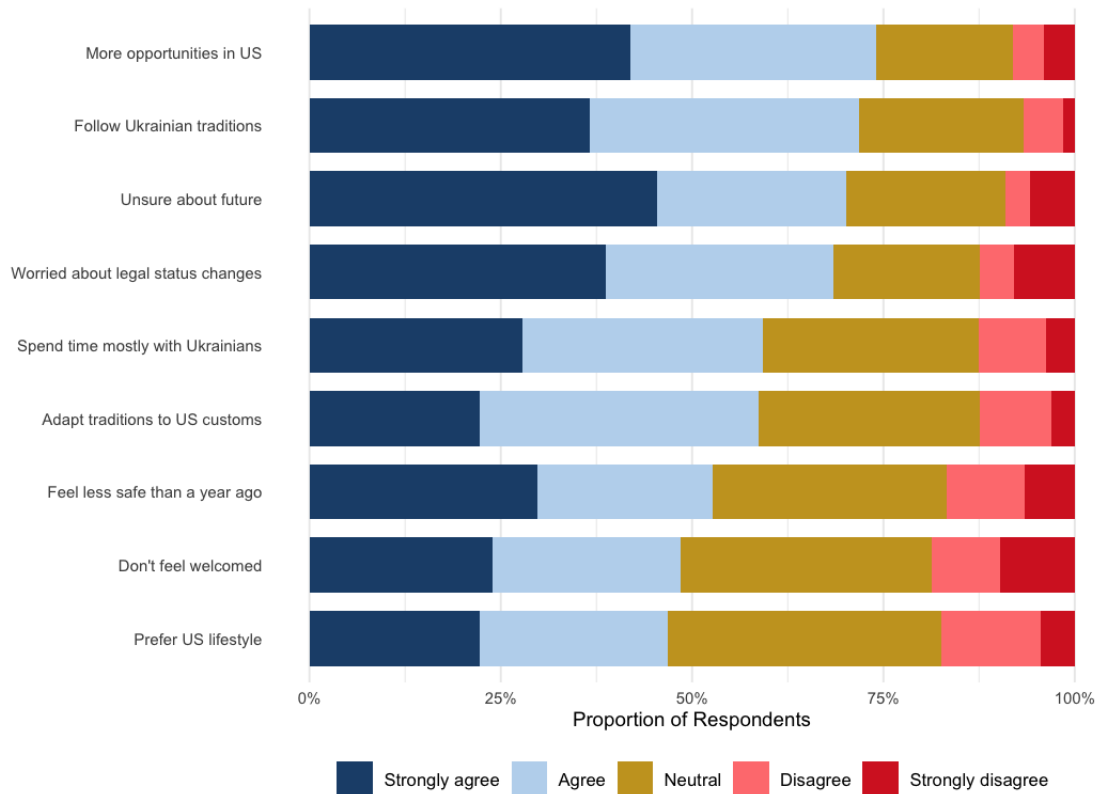
These concerns reflect the precarious nature of immigration status uncertainty in addition to the ongoing geopolitical instability in Ukraine. This uncertainty undermines respondents' capacity to plan for employment, education, housing, and community engagement.

3.7.3 Sense of Belonging at the Community Level

Although respondents largely perceive Washington State as welcoming overall, local-level belonging presents a more mixed picture, as shown in **Figure 7.2**. Notably, 44% of participants (n = 127) agreed or strongly agreed that they do not feel welcomed. This finding highlights a critical gap between structural or symbolic welcome and perceived social inclusion versus social isolation. More investigation is needed to understand the complex interactions of different factors that may contribute to authentic feeling of belonging and welcome for this community.

Figure 7.2: Attitudes Toward Integration and Belonging

Stacked bars show distribution of agreement levels



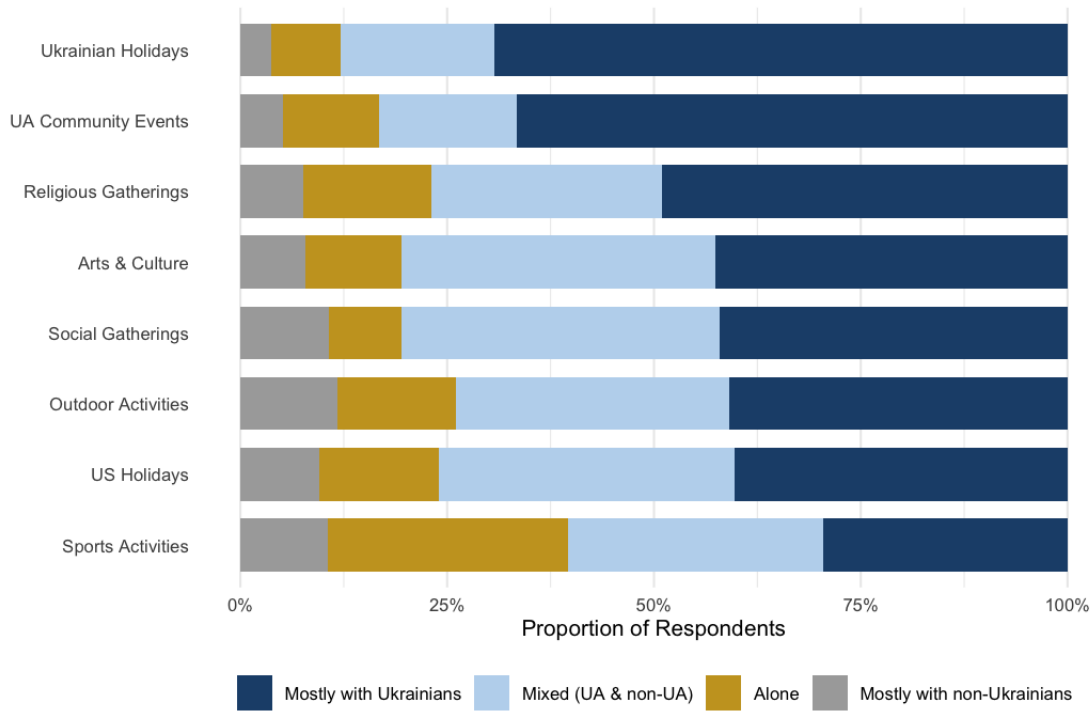
3.7.4 Change in Mental Health Preliminary Correlation Analysis

As mentioned in the prior section about Health, survey results indicate that 22% (n = 64) of respondents reported worse mental health since arriving in the US, whereas 17% (n = 49) report improved mental health and 49% (n = 141) report no change. A preliminary correlation analysis was done to investigate the possible association between indicators of perceived friendliness and feeling of belonging in the Washington community and the mental health status of survey respondents. As in the prior section about employment, we conducted a Poisson regression which estimates Prevalence Ratios (PRs) directly, adjusting simultaneously for gender, age group, duration in Washington State, immigration status stratum, language barrier, and marital status. The three indicators of belonging chosen for this analysis were:

1. Perceived friendliness of people to Ukrainian immigrants in Washington
2. Experience of discrimination in Washington
3. Feeling unwelcome in the US since the change in US Presidency

Figure 7.3: Social Activity Participation by Company

With whom respondents participate in various activities



While this preliminary analysis did not establish broad correlations across all three indicators, the model points toward a negative trend between experiencing discrimination and mental health status (APR = 0.524, 95% CI: 0.321, 0.856). Further investigation is needed to fully understand the complex interaction between respondents' mental health and lived experiences, including discrimination and feelings of belonging.

3.7.5 Aspirations for the Future and Children's Integration

Despite uncertainty and mixed experiences of belonging, many respondents expressed strong aspirations for long-term integration, particularly for their children. More than half (58%, n = 168) of the survey respondents indicated a desire for their children to integrate into American society. This forward-looking orientation reflects resilience, hope, and a willingness to invest in education, language acquisition, and civic participation when pathways are available.

Patterns of community engagement, as shown in **Figure 7.3**, suggest that while many participants remain closely connected to Ukrainian peers, there is interest in broader social participation when opportunities are accessible and welcoming. These findings point to readiness for integration that can be further supported through targeted programming.

Table 7 Integration and Belonging

Characteristic	N	%
WA is Welcoming		
Friendly / Very Friendly	231	80%
Neutral	47	16%
Unfriendly / Very Unfriendly	5	2%
Experienced Discrimination		
Yes	27	9%
No	208	72%
Don't Know	44	15%
Prefer not to say	11	4%
Unsure About Future		
Agree / Strongly Agree	193	70%
Neutral	57	21%
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	25	9%
Worried About Legal Status		
Agree / Strongly Agree	182	68%
Neutral	51	19%
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	33	12%

Table 7: Integration and Belonging (N=295)

3.8 Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. Participant recruitment relied heavily on community networks, through snowball sampling from the Nashi Immigrants Health Board through social media and word of mouth. As a result, the sample may overrepresent individuals who are already connected to formal or informal support systems and may not fully capture the experiences of those who are more isolated or disengaged from community organizations. Also, since the greatest concentration of respondents resided in western Washington, particularly in King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties, survey data may not be generalizable to experiences of Ukrainian immigrants residing in other parts of the state.

The study also relied on self-reported data, which is inherently subject to bias. Participants may have underreported or overreported their experiences due to social desirability, misinterpretation of questions, or varying levels of literacy and comprehension. In particular, there is concern regarding the interpretation of questions regarding marital status and immigration status. For marital status, respondents who were currently married could report their status as “married and husband is with you”, “married and husband in Ukraine”, or “not legally divorced”. This third category could be capturing either of the prior two categories, and this question does not tell us if respondents are “happily” married or not. For future research, further questions to clarify relationship status and household composition are needed. For immigration status, since 21% of respondents identify as “refugee” status, but only 3% entered through formal refugee resettlement. There is uncertainty about whether respondents are accurately aware of their legal immigration status.

Furthermore, the digital format of the survey, while accessible for many, may have also posed a barrier for respondents with limited digital literacy or access to reliable internet or

devices. While respondents with limited technology experience were offered the opportunity to complete the survey on an iPad at a community event (in privacy) with team member assistance, there are limitations to how many willing participants can be reached in person during the study time frame. Furthermore, as respondents had full agency to skip any questions of their choice, some responses had substantial missingness which limited options for analysis.



Oksana Krivizuk, Chair of the Board for the Ukrainian Cultural Center Toloka in Bellevue, Washington, featured in Kyiv Post, Ukraine's Global Voice (Photo: David Kirichenko)



Chapter 4: Conclusion

The survey collected responses from 295 Ukrainian immigrants and refugees residing in Washington State. Most participants were working-age adults, the majority of whom identified as female and reported being married, and many respondents reported having one or two children living in their household. Respondents reported high levels of education and vocational skills from outside the US, with over half holding a bachelor's degree or higher prior to entering the US.

While many respondents report satisfactory health and maintain insurance coverage, a significant proportion experience poor health, limited access to dental and specialty care, and difficulty navigating the healthcare system. The extremely low rate of mental health service utilization highlights a critical gap between need and access. These results underscore the importance of strengthening culturally responsive healthcare services, expanding outreach and education, and reducing administrative and linguistic barriers to care. Targeted interventions in these areas may significantly improve health outcomes and support long-term wellbeing for immigrant households.

Connection and belonging are key themes that emerged from the survey. While most of the respondents have attended English classes, and over half began learning English before entering the US, low self-reported English proficiency and language barriers indicate that language may be a key barrier to success finding relevant employment and connecting to services in this community.

Approximately 80% of respondents entered the US through the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) program. Though the majority plan to remain in the US long-term, their precarious legal status is generating profound anxiety and psychological distress within the community. Housing represents another critical stressor, with 86% of respondents navigating a highly competitive rental market that is particularly unforgiving to newcomers. Despite these

systemic hurdles, approximately 82% of respondents describe Washington State as a welcoming environment; over half actively plan to build their futures here and desire for their children to integrate into American society.

Crucially, while baseline healthcare access appears stable (82% report having a primary care provider), over half of the cohort relies on temporary public health insurance that will be at risk after October 1st, 2026. The impending implementation of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) threatens to sever this lifeline, potentially leading to catastrophic health outcomes. Therefore, we strongly recommend that state and local policymakers proactively develop bridging strategies and alternative coverage safety nets to protect these at-risk populations from federal healthcare retractions.

Overall, the findings illustrate a community that demonstrates resilience but continues to face substantial health-related challenges tied to social drivers of health faced by refugee populations including:

- Housing insecurity
- Immigration status instability
- Employment insecurity
- Financial instability
- Language and cultural barriers
- Health and social service system navigation

These barriers are uniquely exacerbated by the shifting landscape of US immigration policy.

In conclusion, Ukrainian survey participants demonstrated optimism, adaptability and profound readiness to integrate, even while navigating systemic instability. This study highlights a stark mismatch between the vast capacity of this community and the precarious structural opportunities currently available to them. Continued investment in legal support for immigration pathways, community-level inclusion, and family-centered supports will be critical to transforming initial resettlement phases into sustained belonging and long-term integration success.

Chapter 5: Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the authors of this report recommend four courses of action for funders, policymakers, and service providers seeking to strengthen immigrant integration and community cohesion:

5.1 Invest in Legal Stability and Information Access

High levels of uncertainty about the future and legal immigration status underscore the need for accessible, culturally and linguistically appropriate legal services. Funding should prioritize legal navigation, know-your-rights education, and trauma-informed counseling that addresses immigration-related anxiety. Reducing uncertainty is foundational to successful integration. This investment should include support for and partnerships with already established CBOs supporting Ukrainian immigrant needs with members coming from within the community, representing the ‘lived-experiences’ of that community.

5.2 Increase Options for Education Credentialing and Professional Development

Given the highly educated and trained population with considerable work ethic and a desire to remain in this community, it is crucial to create options for prior education and credentials to be (at least partially) honored as valid qualification or certification for employment opportunities. Furthermore, Ukrainian immigrants who are seeking professional development need options that match the reality of their lived experience: language-accessible training that recognizes that many people in this population are taking care of families and already have job experience that can be translated into different fields here in the US.

5.3 Expand Opportunities for Skill-Aligned Employment

Respondents possess substantial educational and professional assets that are currently constrained insufficiently aligned support systems to match skilled individuals with relevant

employment opportunities. Investments in accessible workforce development programs, credential evaluation, and professional advancement that meet Ukrainian immigrants where they are at regarding language proficiency represent a high-return policy intervention. Expanding opportunities for skill-aligned employment will support economic mobility and realize the full value of this workforce.

5.4 Improve Access to English Language Learning

Navigating systems like education and healthcare in the US is already challenging and is made even more difficult for newcomers who are not yet conversational or fluent in English. Creating or expanding programs that assist Ukrainian immigrants in improving their English skills, particularly in system navigation settings (such as employment, healthcare, housing and education) that are accessible to working adults in terms of time, frequency and affordability is key to ensuring the belonging and thriving of this population.

5.5 Create Pathways to Improve Health Care Access

Data indicate that respondents were initially successful in accessing and utilizing health care services. However, a looming “coverage cliff” is expected to affect approximately 81% of respondents who arrived through U4U, as their Medicaid coverage is projected to terminate. This loss of coverage may result in increased barriers to care and greater economic strain.

Maintaining and expanding culturally and linguistically responsive health navigation services can improve access while reducing reliance on costly crisis care, such as emergency department visits, and easing overall system burden. Providing clear pathways to health care access and affordable coverage is essential to maintaining wellness, preventing disease transmission, and supporting productivity and successful community integration

5.6 Enhance Supports for Community Belonging

Washington is generally perceived as welcoming by many respondents, and most express a desire for their children to fully integrate into American society. However, a significant number do not feel a strong sense of belonging at the local level, and a smaller portion report experiences of perceived discrimination.

Supportive strategies, such as sustaining intercultural programming, mentorship opportunities, and increased family engagement in public life, schools, and professional

settings, can help foster stronger community belonging. Developing bridge programs and engaging local community-based organizations (CBOs) in collaborative efforts can provide structure and promote deeper, more sustainable integration.

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