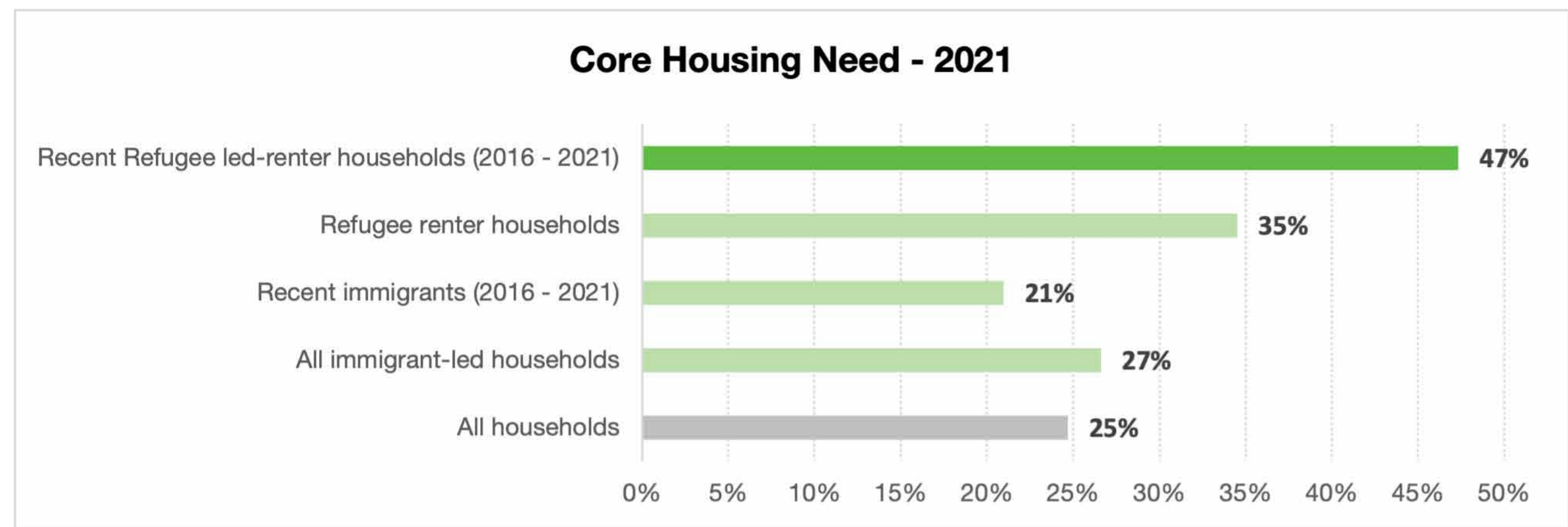


REFUGEE HOUSING STRATEGY

Developed by the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC and BC Non-Profit Housing Association



Housing is a concern for all, but newcomers face unique barriers, often tied to their immigration status, limiting their ability to access affordable, adequate, and safe housing. When it comes to newcomers, Government Assisted Refugees and Refugee Claimants in particular face unprecedented housing needs while also being overlooked in provincial housing planning. Nearly half of refugee-led renter households are in core housing need.



Top Housing Challenges of Refugee Claimants

1. BC's housing system is not designed to address the needs of Refugee Claimants (RCs).



RCs are ineligible for federal or provincial rental support, leaving many vulnerable to homelessness.



RCs need up to seven months to find housing, and disjointed services intended to assist in resettlement make the challenges much worse.

7,700

RCs arrived in BC in 2023*

~370 RCs can be served with BC's current transitional housing supply.

~260 RCs were placed in ~48 dedicated refugee claimant transitional units.*

2. Refugee Claimants are increasingly experiencing homelessness or precarious housing, partly due to a lack of dedicated shelter services geared towards refugees. With no place else to go, RCs are showing up in increasing numbers with BC's shelter system.

78%

of Vancouver emergency shelters reported an increase in RCs, 32% said at least half of their beds were occupied by RCs.*



Low-barrier shelters are not designed for RCs and do not adequately support their unique needs.

3. Experiences of discrimination are common and impact the housing outcomes of Refugees Claimants.



Landlord biases result in RCs being denied housing due to their place of origin and/or race, hindering housing access in an already competitive market.

Top Housing Challenges of Government Assisted Refugees (GAR)

Existing government supports are not sufficient to address the housing needs of GARs.

- Rental Assistance Program income supports have not kept pace with rising housing costs and prevent GARs from being able to afford local rents.
- Brief stays in transitional housing are not enough to find affordable and suitable housing, especially for families and those with special needs.



BC's competitive rental market prevents GARs from accessing the housing they need.

- Large family sizes complicate the search for affordable housing, often landing them in overcrowded and unsuitable conditions.

Experiences of discrimination impact the resettlement journey of GARs.

e.g. needing six months rent for a security deposit, needing cosigners or guarantors.

- Resettlement is often hindered by stereotypes and misinformation based on place of origin and other intersectional identities. A 2022 study found that "64% of Canadians support accepting more Ukrainian refugees into Canada, while only 37% support accepting more Afghan refugees."*



*Sources for this infographic can be found at housingcentral.ca.

Our Recommendations



Increase capital investments to expand long-term, transitional, and emergency housing solutions for refugees



Expand rental subsidy programs to include refugee claimants



Design and build facilities that focus on streamlining access to housing and wraparound supports immediately upon arrival