

ANNUAL REPORT

Supporting Refugee
Talent and Empowering
Employers

2023



Jumpstart celebrated the closing of the Toronto Stock Exchange on July 28, 2023.

Leadership Report

Dear Friends,

2023 was a challenging year for Jumpstart, given the considerable growth we undertook in 2022. We worked to improve our systems so we can maintain a high level of service while serving an increased demand from refugees, asylum seekers, and other displaced individuals.

Despite a difficult economic environment, we expanded our employer relationships, supported hundreds of clients to secure meaningful employment, and delivered on labour mobility pathways for refugees abroad.

This past year we were able to increase our intake capacity to onboard new clients, completed our women's entrepreneurship program that led to the funding of two refugee-led businesses, supported dozens of refugees to come to Canada through our partnership with IRCC on the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP), and expanded our hiring events model by co-leading events in Toronto and Moncton.

We continue to see the successes of refugees from around the world, prospering in their fields of expertise and supporting the economic growth of Canadian businesses. As the country continues to work towards filling labor shortages while embracing diversity, we look to continually innovate how we support refugees, mentors, employers and other stakeholders to build Canada's economic future.

With warmth,
Mustafa Alio, Malaz Sebai, Rand Al Jammal, Darrell Pinto and Bassel Ramli.



Mustafa Alio
Managing Director



Malaz Sebai
Director, Operations



Rand Al Jammal
Director, Programs & Strategy



Darrell Pinto
Director, Employment



Bassel Ramli
Director, Global Mobility

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Jumpstart does one-on-one intake consultations with each client.

We exist to remove employment barriers so employers can leverage refugee talent.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Joining the Global Task Force for Refugee Labour Mobility

At the Global Forum on Refugees in Geneva, Jumpstart was one of the two organizations admitted into the Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility. This recognition underscores our dedication and efforts towards advancing labour mobility globally.

Hosting Two Refugee Hiring Events (Moncton & Toronto)

As part of the #WelcomingEconomy campaign initiatives, Jumpstart and partners at the Refugee Jobs Agenda Roundtable held two hiring events in 2023, which resulted in job offers or post-event second round interviews for 66% of the participants.

Launching Inaugural Refuge(E)xpo

In partnership with New Canadians TV Network, Jumpstart launched the first *Refuge(E)xpo: Celebration of Culture & Creativity* to celebrate World Refugee Day.

About Jumpstart

Jumpstart Refugee Talent is an international, refugee-led charitable organization, headquartered in Toronto, Canada with a network of offices throughout Canada and around the world.

Our work is dedicated to support the economic inclusion of refugees, refugee claimants, and forcibly displaced individuals, by connecting them with meaningful employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

We are also committed to assist displaced people in finding durable solutions by leveraging labour mobility pathways and ensuring their relocation and successful integration into new communities.



(L-R) Marwa Khobieh, Executive Director, Syrian Canadian Foundation and Waseem Jawad, Senior Program Manager Entrepreneurship, provides individualized support for Jumpstart entrepreneurs through programs such as HERStartup, ReInvest, and more.

Our Mission

Jumpstart Refugee Talent is an international, refugee-led charitable organization, headquartered in Toronto, Canada with a network of offices throughout Canada and around the world. Our work is dedicated to support the economic inclusion of refugees, refugee claimants, and forcibly displaced individuals, by connecting them with meaningful employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. We are also committed to assist displaced people in finding durable solutions by leveraging labour mobility pathways and ensuring their relocation and successful integration into new communities.

OUR CORE VALUES

Jumpstart's values are its guiding principles that underline all that we do and all that we stand for. These are the principles that inspire us, challenge us, and reflect our dedication to integrity, excellence, and inclusivity in all aspects of our work.

1

Individualized Approach

We customize our approach to each refugee's economic journey, acknowledging and appreciating their diverse talents and experiences.

2

Changing Narratives and Shaping Hiring Practices

We partner with employers by advising them on the benefits of hiring refugee talent, and challenging stereotypes.

3

Grassroots Representation and Avoiding Tokenism

We are deeply rooted in the communities we serve. Our commitment surpasses mere representation, ensuring genuine reflection of diverse voices. We reject tokenism and strive for authentic representation.

4

Innovative and Data-Driven Solutions

We employ data-driven solutions to tackle refugee employment challenge and utilize creative and effective strategies inspired by robust data for impactful outcomes.

5

Collaboration and Partnerships

We prioritize collaboration through partnerships to amplify impact by engaging like-minded organizations. We support refugee-led initiatives and promote collective action and intentional choices.

OUR REFUGEE CLIENTS

In the past four decades, Canada has welcomed more than one million refugees into the country. According to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, over the next three years alone, **Canada expects to welcome over 1 million more** new immigrants.

Alongside this increase in newcomers to the country, there has been a growing demand by specific industries, including the health, manufacturing, and banking, to fill the labour gaps and shortages of skilled talent. At Jumpstart, we work to bring employers and refugee talent together to bridge the gap by filling labour needs and tapping into the vast and diverse skilled workers entering the country.

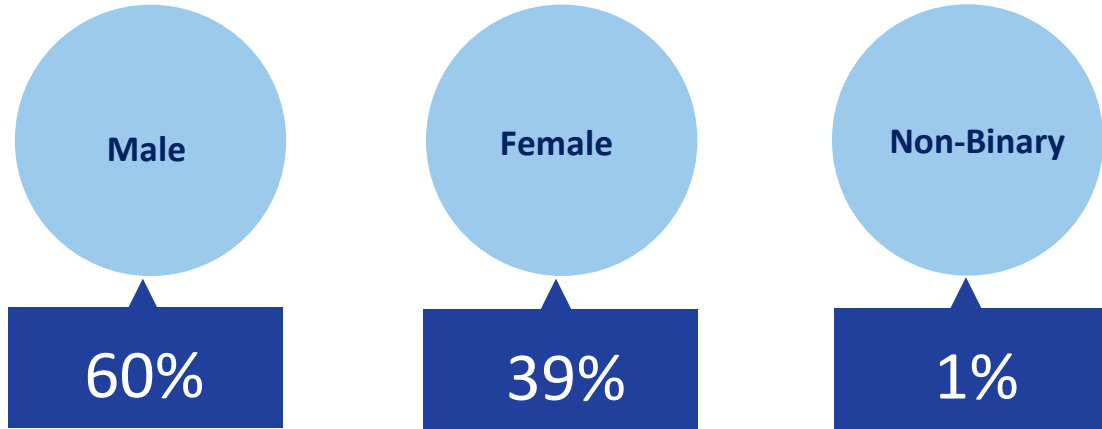
The following pages provide an overview of our clients at Jumpstart.



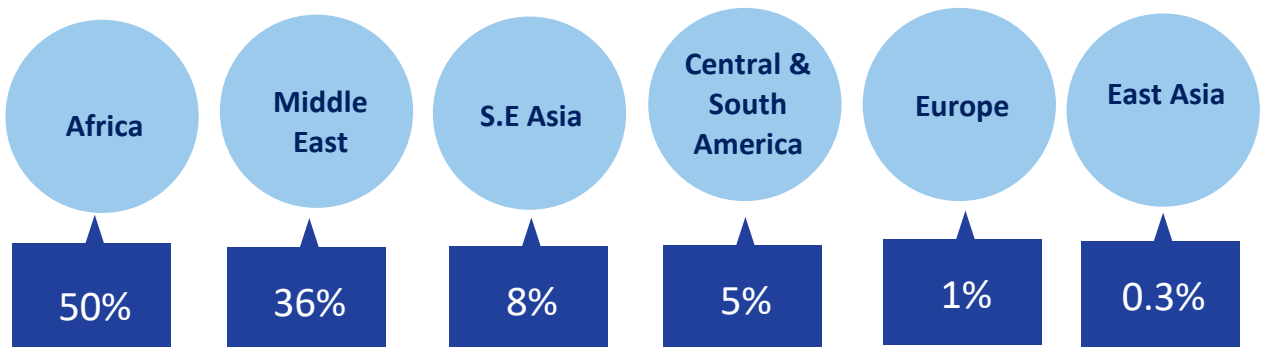
We serve over 2,500 clients with a majority having a Canadian Language Benchmark level of 7 or greater.

REFUGEE CLIENT PROFILE

Gender



Region of Origin

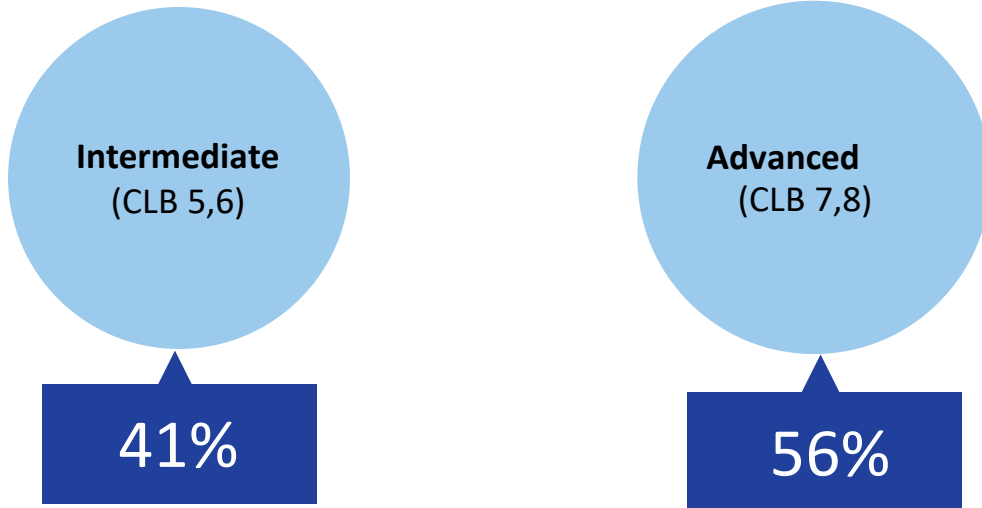


57%

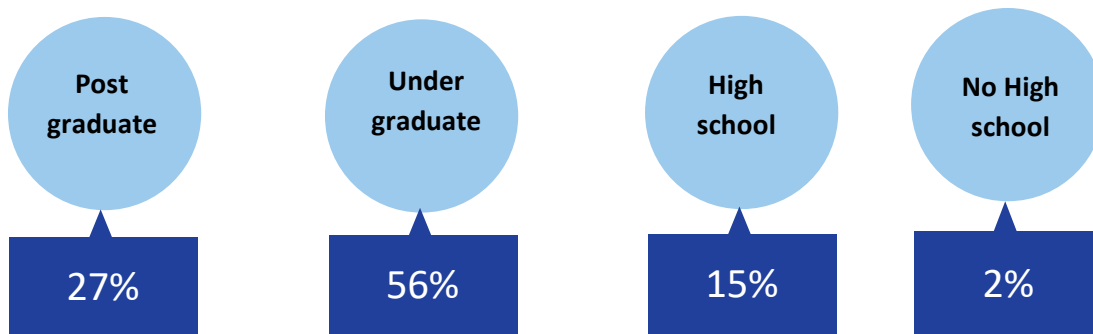
In 2023, forcibly displaced individuals without permanent residency represented 57% of total clients served.

REFUGEE CLIENT PROFILE

Canadian Language Benchmark Level (CLB)



Education Level



Over 80% of our clients have an undergraduate or higher degree.

OUR PROGRAMS

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Refugee Talent Hub (RTH) is Jumpstart's all-in-one employment support program, helping employers connect with skilled refugee talent. Through tailored recruitment, private hiring events, and onboarding support, RTH ensures employers access top-tier candidates while fostering inclusive hiring practices that recognize refugee expertise and drive business success.

MENTORSHIP SUPPORT

Welcome Talent Canada (WTC) connects refugees and forcibly displaced individuals with Canadian professionals for a four-month mentorship. Mentees gain career guidance, industry insights, networking opportunities, and support in navigating the job market. Matches are tailored to professional backgrounds, ensuring meaningful connections that help mentees achieve their career goals in Canada.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT

Entrepreneurship Support is designed exclusively for refugees to Canada. Through this program we offer one-on-one support for refugee-led businesses to guide and grow their startups. We also facilitate connections with our network of businesses, angel investors, and professional advisors.

ECONOMIC MOBILITY PATHWAYS PILOT (EMPP)

Through the **EMPP Program** we empower employers to harness the power of global talent. With Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) as our partner on this Canadian-government program, we aim to facilitate the arrival of up to 2,000 skilled refugees into Canada. Through the use of TBB's international talent catalogue, refugees from around the world are matched with meaningful employment opportunities in Canada.

CAREER READINESS

Career Readiness is designed to prepare our refugee talent for success in the Canadian job market. Through personalized support, workshops, and mentorship, participants enhance their resumes, interview techniques, and knowledge of workplace culture, paving the way for meaningful employment across Canada.

RESUME BUILDING

Our **Resume Building** support service works with skilled talent to create tailored, professional resumes for the Canadian job market. With expert guidance, participants learn how to highlight their skills, experiences, and achievements, increasing their likelihood of landing meaningful employment.

2023 IMPACT

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

2023 was a landmark year for the Refugee Talent Hub (RTH), advancing its mission to **connect skilled refugee clients with meaningful employment**. RTH referred nearly 1,300 refugee clients, achieving an impressive interview-to-hire ratio of nearly 20%. Through strategic partnerships and innovative hiring initiatives, RTH made significant strides—most notably with its Refugee Hiring Events.

Held in Moncton and Toronto, these events showcased a **groundbreaking hiring model**—led by Jumpstart in collaboration with World Education Services (WES) and local agency partners—that delivered results 13 times more effective than traditional job fairs.

RTH remains at the forefront of the **Welcoming Economy campaign**, a coalition dedicated to expanding employment access for refugee talent. By strengthening partnerships, deepening employer engagement, and enhancing post-hire support, RTH continues to create meaningful job opportunities, foster inclusive workplaces, and celebrate success stories along the way.

In 2023, the Refugee Talent Hub team referred nearly 1300 refugee clients to employers, achieving a nearly 20% interview-to-hire ratio.



(L-R) Darrell Pinto, Jumpstart Director, Employment and Ross Anderson, Starbucks Canada Head, Social Impact, Public Policy & Sustainability.

2023 HIRING EVENTS

349

Candidates Participated

in our two Refugee Hiring Events, in Toronto, Ontario and Moncton, New Brunswick.

35

Employers Participated

45

Employment Offers Sent

12 Settlement Agencies participated in training for the Hiring Event Model.

66%

SUCCESS RATE

186

Refugee Candidates

progressed to second round interviews.

“Regardless of where they’re from, people want to feel empowered and confident during their job search and career journey, and this starts with networking at events like the Jumpstart 2023 Toronto Hiring Event that Sajad attended. I am proud to support Sajad’s career journey at TD and know that we will have many more stories like his to tell.”

Rashmi Vohra, Associate Vice President, Colleague Capabilities, Customer and Employee Experience, TD

2023 IMPACT

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Community Relations' proactive, collaborative, innovative, and efficient approach was evident throughout 2023. They showcased a year of remarkable achievements, marked by **exceeding intake targets**, enhancing data collection and client engagement, conducting widespread outreach operations, organizing collaborative workshops, expanding partnerships, and effectively representing Jumpstart in various events.

Streamlining the intake processes through call scheduling platforms and incorporating resume support significantly improved efficiency and client experience, reducing follow-up times and optimizing resource utilization. Similarly, enhancements in data collection processes resulted in higher data quality, facilitating better decision-making and program design and evaluation.

Looking ahead, the impact of these improvements on Jumpstart's organization is significant. Streamlined processes and improved data collection will **enhance productivity and effectiveness** in delivering programs and services. By leveraging these advancements, Jumpstart is poised to continue making meaningful contributions to its community and stakeholders.



(Former) Welcome Talent Canada Program Manager Amina Osman stands with participants at a World Refugee Day Event, WeWork Vancouver.



The program **exceeded its intake** target goal by successfully completing intake and needs assessments for **over 1250 clients**. This was facilitated through **enhanced data collection processes**. Introducing a **new call scheduling platform** and streamlined processes resulting in improved overall efficiency.

+1250

ENGAGED CLIENTS

2023 IMPACT

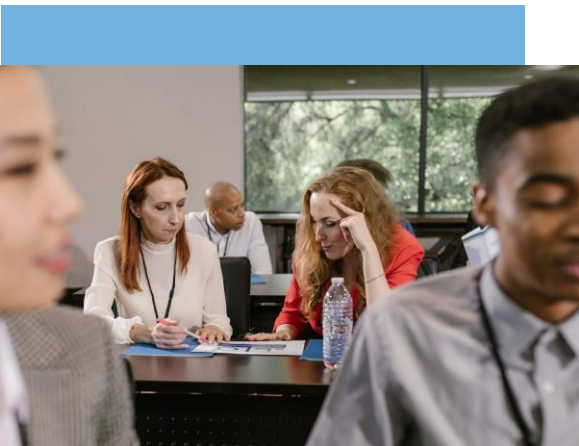
MENTORSHIP SUPPORT

In 2023, the **Welcome Talent Canada** program reached key milestones in strengthening mentorship support for refugee job seekers. We successfully completed mentor orientations and intake processes, ensuring a seamless onboarding experience. Throughout the year, we facilitated **173 mentorships**, connecting Canadian professionals with job seekers to expand career opportunities and professional networks.

A key priority was maintaining an **inclusive, impactful, and collaborative** program. While recruiting enough mentors remained a challenge, strategic follow-ups—through surveys, emails, and calls—helped ensure mentees received relevant guidance and support. By working closely with employers and partners, we **attracted more mentors**, increasing participation and strengthening our mentorship pool.

To enhance engagement, we implemented **comprehensive training, regular check-ins, and clear communication of program goals**, leading to higher satisfaction and more successful mentorships. These efforts **reinforced our commitment to supporting refugees on their employment journey**, preventing disruptions in their professional development and helping them build strong networks.

Looking ahead, we will continue refining our approach to sustain program integrity and effectiveness. Through collaboration and coordination with employers and partners, we will further expand mentorship opportunities—ensuring more refugees gain the guidance, connections, and career pathways they need to thrive in Canada.



Welcome Talent Canada was Jumpstart's first program, launching in 2016. Photo credit: RDNE



Jennifer Heynen

Vice President of Talent at DUCA Financial, Ontario and a Jumpstart Mentor in our Welcome Talent Canada program.

"Inclusion in the workplace is essential to attracting new talent and keeping employees happy at work. People want to work somewhere that they feel valued and supported. An inclusive culture creates an environment where everyone feels respected and empowered to contribute."

+170

Mentorships

Our Welcome Talent Canada Program successfully facilitated 173 mentorship matches across the country in 2023 with Canadian professionals from 72 different employers volunteering their time to mentor talented refugees.

53

New Volunteers

We are honoured to have added 53 skilled, committed, and enthusiastic new mentors to our team. Each volunteer played one (or several) roles to Jumpstart Refugee clients, including mentoring a newly settled refugee, offering resume support, assisting in interview preparation, or advising a refugee start-up.

Volunteers are a crucial part of our work and are instrumental in supporting our refugee clients in their career journey.

2023 IMPACT

RESUME BUILDING

In 2023, our Resume Team achieved significant milestones in supporting refugees across Canada in their employment journey. We **crafted 882 personalized resumes** and **updated 89 resumes** for returning clients, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to their success in competitive job markets. Our work did not stop at resume creation; we also took steps to improve our clients' chances of success by adapting resumes to industry demands.

We describe our year as transformative, impactful, empowering, and collaborative. Our team's efforts were focused on **providing personalized support** while fostering independence for job seekers.

However, we faced challenges, especially with the increased client intake toward the end of the year. To meet the demand, we swiftly recruited volunteers and interns, **ensuring all clients received timely assistance**. Additionally, recognizing that many clients needed more comprehensive support, we began developing workshops to equip them with job search skills beyond resumes, empowering them for greater self-sufficiency.

Key program improvements included the development of the **Resume Best Practices** by Industry document, ensuring resumes met specific industry standards. We also emphasized the importance of highlighting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and achievements on resumes, helping **clients present their accomplishments effectively** to employers.

These changes strengthen and enhance service quality. Moving forward, our **focus on industry trends and empowering clients** through workshops will continue to position us as a leader in supporting refugees' career success.

+ 970
Resumes Created



Dawit Demoz (left), Jumpstart Senior Manager, Client Engagement

2023 IMPACT

ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT

Our Entrepreneurship program in 2023 experienced a year full of innovation, collaborative partnerships, and impactful progress. A key highlight was the **continued success of the HER Start-up program**, which supported 30 female refugee entrepreneurs in 2023. Now in its fourth year, this program—delivered in partnership with the Syrian Canadian Foundation—empowered participants by providing business support from trainers, mentors, and consultants over a six-month period.

A significant part of our success came from the **personalized support** provided by Waseem Jawad, our Entrepreneurship Support Senior Manager. Waseem offered 1:1 guidance to 15 clients across various sectors, with one-third of them being women. Through in-depth weekly calls, Waseem helped clients navigate their entrepreneurial journeys, providing tailored advice and resources to ensure their growth.

One standout success story includes **WUD Chocolate**, which successfully brought its products to market. Meanwhile, **Huda Fashion** finalized its business plan and is now entering the fashion design phase.

Through these initiatives, Jumpstart continues to provide refugee entrepreneurs with the tools, resources, and opportunities they need to thrive.

Nesreen Abusultan

Owner and co-founder of WUD Chocolates and Gifts, and participant in Jumpstart Refugee Talent's Entrepreneurial Support program.

"The entrepreneurial support from Jumpstart was crucial for the successful launch of Wud Chocolates & Gifts in 2023. Jumpstart helped refine my business plan, provided financial guidance, and assisted in marketing plans. Waseem's mentorship and Jumpstart's networking opportunities introduced me to amazing opportunities. Waseem and Noora's expertise in marketing and branding helped create a strong brand identity and tell my story through my products. This comprehensive support not only facilitated the launch but also significantly contributed to my growth as an entrepreneur, equipping me with the skills and confidence to navigate business complexities."



2023 IMPACT

ECONOMIC MOBILITY PATHWAYS PILOT

It was an exciting year of acceleration and growth for the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot program (EMPP). Jumpstart has played a key role as in the design and development of this program since 2017. Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) launched a dedicated pathway in June 2023 to **better facilitate refugee resettlement** through economic integration. Since then, our EMPP program has greatly expanded facilitating Canadian employers in diversifying their workforce and bridging their talent shortages by offering a distinctive immigration route to hire skilled refugees from abroad.

Through our partnership with [Talent Beyond Boundaries](#), we streamlined the process that ensured a seamless recruitment, immigration, and relocation effort from a **global talent pool of over 100,000 candidates**.

In December 2023, **we were among the two organizations admitted into the Global Task Force** on refugee labour mobility; Jumpstart and the European Union. Canada's Minister of Immigration, Marc Miller has also since promised to make the national EMPP permanent, alongside the launch of the federal stream.

Additionally, Jumpstart is looking to fund several refugee-serving organizations in Latin America to support refugees abroad. To better meet Jumpstart's own growing demand for refugee labour mobility, our EMPP has **expanded its team into Lebanon and Columbia**.



+ 85 Employers Engaged

+350 Candidates Referred

+115 Interviews Secured

85 Jobs Offered/ 82 Accepted Job Offer

33% Candidate Referral to Interview

73% Candidate Interview to Hire

2024 INITIATIVES

Jumpstart will stay true to its commitment of serving all refugees and displaced peoples, regardless of their immigration status.

With a record number of asylum seekers in Canada, and thousands of temporary Ukrainian residents seeking support, we expect increased demand that will stretch us to our limit.

As we engage new clients, we continuously learn about gaps in the system, and it creates opportunities for us to address them.

1 Language Acceleration

Recognizing that English language proficiency is **one of the largest barriers** for some refugees, we plan to pilot programming that will enable more refugee job seekers to access employment supports and opportunities due to improved language proficiency.

2 Entrepreneurship

Employment is only one half of economic inclusion with entrepreneurship being the other. We aim to **increase entrepreneurship programming**, such as developing a refugee marketplace and an impact investment fund.

3 Hiring Events

With our model proven successful, we aim to bring it to multiple cities across Canada, **engaging more settlement agencies and employers** to deliver outcomes-based employment events.



Jumpstart Refugee Talent serves refugees from diverse backgrounds and is dedicated to advancing economic mobility, addressing underemployment, and fostering economic inclusion by connecting refugees, refugee claimants, and forcibly displaced individuals with meaningful employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

We also support their successful integration into new communities through labour mobility pathways.

Contact Us

(888) 977-3384
info@jumpstart.ca
www.jumpstartrefugee.ca

Our Head Office

1 University Ave, 3rd Floor
Toronto, ON, M5J 2P1

