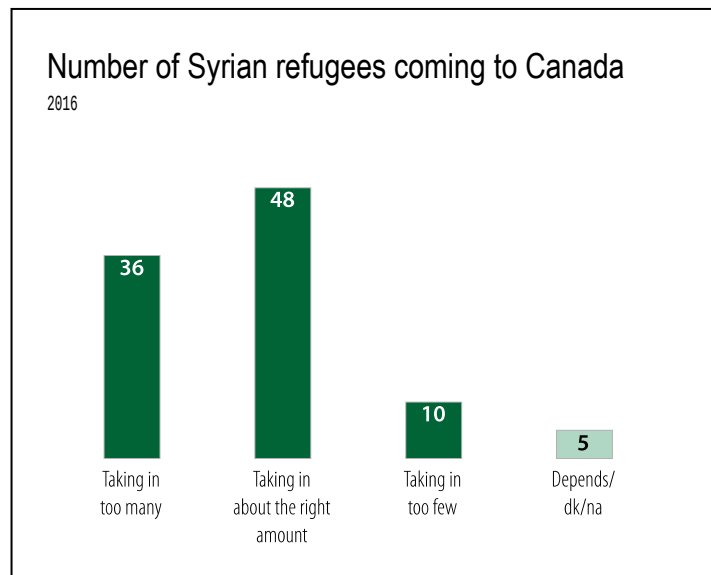


Syrian Refugees

A strong plurality of Canadians express approval with the number of Syrian refugees being accepted by Canada this year. Those who believe there are too many are most concerned about the capacity to support the number arriving or about diverting resources from other important priorities.

Number of Syrian refugees being accepted into Canada. The conflict and humanitarian crisis in Syria has prompted a major response by both the federal government and the Canadian people that has resulted in more than 30,000 Syrian refugees being accepted into the country to date, with plans for an additional number by the end of 2016. This represents the most significant influx of refugees into Canada since the late 1970s when more than 50,000 South-east Asians were sponsored.

A strong plurality of Canadians are comfortable with the number of Syrian refugees that have been accepted to date. Close to half (48%) believe it is about the right number, and another one in ten (10%) believe we should take in even more, compared with one-third (36%) who say the country is taking in too many refugees from Syria.



Opinions about the number of Syrian refugees being accepted into Canada varies across the country. It is in Alberta (49%) and Manitoba/Saskatchewan (43%) where people are most likely to say the number is too many, while this sentiment is least evident in Atlantic Canada (28%) and B.C. (29%). This concern is also more prevalent among Canadians 45 plus (41%; versus 28% of those 18 to 29), and by those with lower levels of education and income. Opinions are the same whether people are born in Canada or in another country.

Why too many Syrian refugees are being accepted. Those who say that Canada is taking in too many Syrian refugees were asked why they believe this to be the case (unprompted, without offering response options). This group is most likely to say “too many” because they believe the country cannot take care of this many refugees (e.g., in terms of housing, jobs, other forms of support) (53%) or because it diverts resources and attention away from other more pressing priorities (40%).

Smaller proportions of this group who say “too many refugees” cite reasons pertaining to refugees having different values or lifestyles that don’t fit well with the Canadian way of life (14%) or because refugees are not being adequately screened for security reasons (12%). Others say Canada should not be taking in any Syrian refugees (e.g., they should go elsewhere) (7%) or that Canada should take more refugees from other countries and not favour those from Syria (6%).

