



**MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

MPS Quick Reference Guide to Ukraine and Ukrainian Culture for Educators and Staff

Where Is Ukraine?

Ukraine is located in eastern Europe. It is bordered by the Sea of Azov, the Black Sea, Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Belarus, and Russia. The distance from Ukraine to Wisconsin is about 5,000 mi (8,100 km). A direct flight from Milwaukee may take about 10 hours.



Україна



Dniester Canyon

Geography

Ukraine is similar in size to Texas and is divided into 24 regions as well as one autonomous republic, Crimea. The country consists almost entirely of level plains at an average elevation of 574 ft (175 m) above sea level.

Capital and Largest City: Kyiv or Kiev, located on the Dnieper River in north-central Ukraine.

Population: 43 million (according to the [World Bank](#) 2021). For comparison, the United States has a population of 331.5 million.

Climate

Ukraine has a mostly temperate climate, with the exception of the southern coast of Crimea, which has a subtropical Mediterranean climate. The country enjoys sufficient sunshine and year-round rainfall, mostly from May to August. Ukraine has four seasons similar to seasons in Wisconsin.



Ukrainian Culture

Languages: The vast majority of people speak Ukrainian, which is written with a form of the Cyrillic alphabet. The language is closely related to Russian but also has distinct similarities to the Polish language. Other languages spoken are Polish, Yiddish, Rusyn, Belarusian, Romanian/Moldovan, Bulgarian, Crimean Turkish, and Hungarian. Many Ukrainians use Russian as a second language.

Religion: The predominant religion is Eastern Orthodoxy, practiced by almost half the population. Other religions include Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, Islam (practiced primarily by the Crimean Tatars), Judaism, and Ukrainian Greek Catholic.

Cuisine: The Ukrainian diet includes a variety of meats, poultry, fish, grains, vegetables, and fruits. Rye is an important grain grown locally and used for bread making. Some staple vegetables are potatoes, cabbage, and beets. Food restrictions are mostly personal choices. Ukrainian children often bring treats like candy or cake to school to celebrate their birthdays with their classmates even up to high school.



Borscht

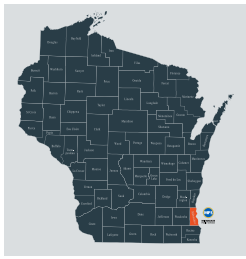
Education: Ukraine has, according to UNESCO, an adult literacy rate of 99.97%. Students receive formal education in grades 1–12. Most children ages one through six receive preschool education. Student progress is evaluated on a 12-point proficiency scale.



Clothing: Ukrainians take pride in the way they dress, with many following Western values and fashion. Some students might wear *vyshyvanka* to school, an embroidered shirt that is a symbol of national pride. Many students attend schools that require school uniforms.

Why are Ukrainians coming to the U.S.?

On February 24, 2022, Russia started a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. As a result, according to the United Nations, as of July 2022, more than 5.2 million refugees from Ukraine have escaped the war to various countries across Europe. Due to the humanitarian crisis, a number of displaced Ukrainian citizens or nationals have relocated to the United States.



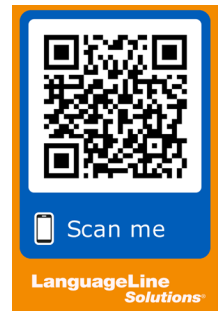
How are Ukrainians coming to Wisconsin?

Through Uniting for Ukraine (U4U), Ukrainians who fled Russia's unprovoked war are able to come to the United States. Ukrainians participating in U4U must have a supporter such as a family member in the United States who agrees to provide financial support for the duration of their stay (a period of up to two years). As a result, Ukrainians are not arriving through resettlement agencies.

How should educators prepare?

MPS educators should use their training and skills in welcoming newcomers.

- ▶ Get to know your students and families. Approach students with a lens of empathy and trauma-informed care.
- ▶ Create a core group of support involving school psychologists, social workers, nurses, and counselors.
- ▶ Be attentive to students' clothing needs for Wisconsin weather.
- ▶ Learn how to say a few phrases in your students' language.
- ▶ Be aware that students are in a major transition. Issues such as housing, clothing, medical resources, or immigration requirements may cause students to be absent from school from time to time.
- ▶ Realize that many Ukrainian arrivals are middle-class families who left behind homes, jobs, possessions, and finances, and are now attempting to build a new life from scratch.
- ▶ Use LanguageLine (<https://mpsmke.com/languageLine>) to access an interpreter over the phone.
- ▶ Google Translate may be helpful but only in limited circumstances. Select Ukrainian or Russian.
- ▶ Contact the MPS Department of Communications to request translation (for written materials) or interpretation (oral) at mpsmke.com/translation or mpsmke.com/interpreter.
- ▶ For resources to combat bullying/harassment, visit stopbullying.gov or www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/aanhpi-massa-factsheet-201606.pdf.
- ▶ WIDA provides valuable resources for English learners in multiple languages, including Ukrainian: <https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/learners/engagement>.



Language Considerations

Become familiar with your students' English proficiency level. Use the Infinite Campus pathway for English Language Proficiency (ELP) verification: **Index > Student Information > English Learner > EL tabs**

For further information about the significance of ELP levels in learning English, contact your school ESL specialist.



Who can educators contact within MPS?

For assistance, contact your school social worker, school nurse, school psychologist, or school counselor depending upon needs.

Instructional Coach/Family Engagement (ELs)

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What agencies can provide information and support?

General Information	St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church	http://stmichaelsukr.org/
	Wisconsin Department of Children and Families	https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/
Cultural Orientation	https://switchboardta.org/blog/resource-list-serving-ukrainian-newcomers/?mc_cid=97644a17e7&mc_eid=21acaca39d https://city.milwaukee.gov/Health/Information/Resources-for-Ukrainian-Arrivals	
Resettlement Information	International Institute of Wisconsin	https://www.iwisconsin.org/
	Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin	https://www.lsswis.org/

Helpful Phrases

English	Written	Ukrainian Pronunciation
Hello	Привіт	Prih-VEET
How are you?	Як справи?	Yahk SPRAH-vih?
Please	Будь ласка	Bood LAHS-kah
What is your name?	Як тебе звати?	Yahk teh-BEH ZVAH-tih?
My name is . . .	Мене звати	Meh-NEH ZVAH-tih [insert name]
Do you need help?	Тобі потрібна допомога?	Toh-BEE poh-TREEB-nah doh-poh-MOH-gha?
What language do you speak?	Якою мовою ви розмовляєте?	Yah-KAW-yoo MOH-voh-yoo vih roh-z-mohv-LAH-yeh-teh
How do you say in Ukrainian?	Як сказати українською?	Yahk ska-ZAH-tih oo-krah-YEEN-skoh-you?
My friend	Мій друг	MEEY droogh
Wait a moment for an interpreter.	Зачекайте, будь ласка, перекладача.	Zah-che-KAI-teh bood LAHS-kah PEH-reh-klah-dah-CHA
Classroom	Класна кімната	KLAHSS-nah keem-NAH-ta
Restroom	Туалет	Too-ah-LET
Parent signature is needed.	Потрібен підпис батьків.	Poh-t-REEB-en PEAD-pihs baht-KEEV