



Resettlement Country: Canada

Last updated: [2022]

1. Resettlement Policy and Programme Description

1.1 Programme Year/Cycle:

Canada has a long history of providing humanitarian assistance to people fleeing persecution in their homeland or displaced by conflicts. Canada accepts new referrals from the UNHCR and private sponsors on a yearly basis, tracked by calendar year.

For more information on Canada's history, please refer to:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/canada-role/timeline.html>

1.2 Resettlement Policy and Programme

Canada's resettlement program is administered by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. The objectives of Canada's refugee program are to save lives, offer protection to the displaced and persecuted, meet Canada's international legal obligations with respect to refugees, and respond to international crises by providing assistance to those in need of resettlement.

Since 2002, with the implementation of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, Canada has placed emphasis on the following principles for refugee resettlement:

- A shift toward protection rather than ability to successfully establish;
- Long term, multiyear planning;
- Group processing where possible to increase efficiencies where common group resettlement needs are present;
- Rapid family reunification;
- Accelerated processing of urgent and vulnerable protection cases; and
- Balancing inclusiveness with effective management through a closer relationship with partners.

Within its overall immigration plan, Canada resettles Convention refugees, members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Class (HPC), and persons who are admitted under public policy considerations due to the compelling nature of their particular situation. These latter two groups are, respectively, persons who are not Convention refugees, but who are in refugee-like situations or who represent vulnerable groups within their own country or a third country and who require protection through resettlement.

Through the [Government-Assisted Refugees Program](#), Canada sets a target each year for the resettlement of Convention refugees who are eligible to receive financial and settlement assistance from the Government of Canada. For government-assisted



refugees, Canada has shifted to an approach which focuses on regional multiyear commitments, thereby enabling better forward planning for resettlement partners.

In addition, Canada has the [Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program](#), which enables Canadian citizens and permanent residents to submit undertakings for refugees and persons in refugee-like situations (members of the HPC) for consideration for resettlement. Upon approval, the sponsor is responsible for providing financial and settlement assistance for up to one year after arrival in Canada. Eligible private sponsorship groups are: [Sponsorship Agreement Holders \(SAH\)](#), [Groups of Five \(G5\)](#), and [Community Sponsors \(CS\)](#).

The [Blended Visa Office-Referred Program](#), was introduced in 2013. Under this stream, Convention refugees who are referred to Canada by the UNHCR are matched with a private sponsor. These refugees receive 6 months of financial assistance from the Government of Canada and 6 months of financial assistance from the private sponsor. The sponsor is also responsible for providing up to 12 months of settlement support.

Refugees are granted permanent protection in Canada, with refugees processed overseas granted permanent resident status upon arrival in Canada. Permanent residents become eligible to apply for citizenship once all requirements are met. All resettled refugees, like other permanent residents, are eligible to work legally in Canada immediately after arrival and have access to education, health care, and other federal and provincial services.

1.3 Ministries and Departments

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is responsible for Canada's resettlement policy. Refugees destined to Quebec fall under the Canada-Quebec Accord on Immigration, which has a number of provisions concerning the division of responsibilities between Canada and Quebec.

1.4 Process for Determining the Resettlement Admission Targets

An annual resettlement range is established by the Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship following consultations with provincial governments. The Minister submits the proposed resettlement admissions targets as part of the overall immigration levels plan to Parliament in November of each year. Operational targets are set in accordance with approved levels and follow the calendar year.

2. Eligibility for Refugee Status and other forms of International Protection

2.1 National Legislation defining refugee status eligibility

The [Immigration and Refugee Protection Act \(2001\)](#) and its related Regulations.

2.2 Additional Information



Asylum seekers in Canada may make a protection claim based on the provisions of the Refugee Convention, the fear of facing torture or the risk to life, or risk of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.

3. Resettlement Decision-Making

3.1 Resettlement Admissibility and Public Interest Criteria

All refugees are assessed to ensure they do not pose a threat to the safety, security or health of Canada, through:

- **Security screening** - Canada will not accept any person who is inadmissible on security grounds or for violating human and/or international rights. This includes individuals who have participated in terrorism, including espionage and subversion; war crimes and crimes against humanity; and organized criminality. As part of the security screening process, applicants between the ages of 14 and 79 (inclusive) are required to provide biographical and biometric information, including fingerprints and digital photos.
- **Criminal screening** – Refugees must satisfy the officer that they are not criminally inadmissible, however, refugees are not required to submit police certificates from their country of origin;
- **Medical examination** - Successful applicants are screened for medical conditions likely to be a danger to public health or safety (ex. Tuberculosis). However, unlike applicants for other immigration categories, refugees are not refused on grounds of medical inadmissibility due to excessive demand on Canada's healthcare system.¹

3.2 Requests for Reconsideration

In the case of a refusal where the UNHCR requests reconsideration, the Migration Program Manager at the responsible migration office should be contacted. There is no formal appeal system at the migration office. There is only the possibility of leave for judicial review of the decision at the Federal Court of Canada. If there are compelling reasons to believe that Canadian resettlement policy has not been interpreted properly, further advice can be requested from the UNHCR Branch Office in Ottawa.

3.3. Dependency

As per Canada's immigration legislation, family members are spouses, dependent children, and the dependent children of dependent children.

In the Resettlement Program, administrative guidelines also allow the inclusion of individuals who do not meet the legal definition of family member but who are emotionally or economically dependent on the family unit. These individuals are called *de facto* dependants. It is important to note that even when a relationship of dependency is established, *de facto* dependants must meet the definition of refugee in their own right. An

¹Note, however, that in order to give the various migration offices advance notice on cases with additional medical needs, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada requests that the referral from the UNHCR include the complete medical/health details of the person(s) referred.



example of a de facto dependant would be an elderly relative who has always lived with the family. Canadian migration officers are asked to use their discretion and make every effort to keep refugee families together at the time of selection.

4. Legal Status on Arrival and Citizenship

4.1 Legal Status on Arrival

With very limited exceptions related to urgent protection needs, refugees processed overseas for resettlement are granted permanent resident status upon arrival in Canada. Those who arrive as Protected Temporary Residents may be granted permanent residence status once medical and background checks are passed.

4.2 Eligibility for Citizenship

Canadian citizenship may be granted to permanent residents who meet certain requirements.

For more information, please refer to: [Canadian citizenship - Canada.ca](https://www.citizenship.gc.ca)

5. Processing Priorities

5.1 Processing Priorities

In general, resettlement applications are processed on a first-in-first-out basis aligned with Canada's immigration levels plan. This includes cases referred by private sponsors, the UNHCR, or other designated referral organizations. Canada may prioritize the processing of certain groups based on specific Ministerial commitments or by vulnerability as identified by migration offices, or by our partners, such as the UNHCR. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Refugees referred under the urgent protection program / UNHCR emergency priority referrals (see Section 9 for more information);
- Refugees in detention or in imminent danger or refoulement;
- Women and girls at risk;
- Human Rights Defenders.

6. Special Considerations

6.1 Unaccompanied and Separated Children

If an unaccompanied minor abroad has family in Canada, they could be eligible for consideration as a government-assisted refugee, privately sponsored refugee or sponsored under Canada's Family Class Program. Close coordination with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada headquarters in Ottawa is encouraged to ensure adequate post-arrival support is in place prior to the minor's travel to Canada. In most



cases, a Best Interest Determination is required to allow the Department to proceed with the case. In coordination with the appropriate local office, the minor's relatives in Canada will then be contacted to determine their willingness and ability to provide support and act as guardians for the minor.

If an unaccompanied minor abroad has no family in Canada willing to act as the minor's guardian, the current policy is to not accept them for resettlement.

6.2 Minor Marriage

Under Canadian law, both spouses must be at least 18 years of age at the time of submitting their application for the marriage to be recognized for immigration purposes. While the marriage of a minor may be legally valid when and where it took place, spouses under the age of 18 are not considered members of the family class [R117(9)(a)]. Once an underage spouse turns 18, they can be considered to be a member of the family class. This applies even if the spouse married at a younger age.

For more information, please refer to: [Processing spouses and common-law partners: Assessing the legality of a marriage - Canada.ca](#).

6.3 Refugees with psychosocial, intellectual, sensory or physical disabilities or a serious medical condition

In Canada, provincial governments are responsible for delivering health care and social services. Some health conditions may require frequent or costly medical treatment. Depending on the circumstances of the case, refugees with medical conditions may need to be destined to particular areas where the required medical services are available. As a result, processing times for such cases may be lengthy. Other medical conditions may require substantial support from other persons, both in-transit and within Canada. Thus, when recommending refugee cases with medical conditions it is worth considering the suitability and safety of travel to Canada and the presence of accompanying or other family in Canada able to assist the refugee. It is recommended that the UNHCR consult with the responsible Canadian migration office if there are questions regarding the referral of a specific case, especially if the referral has been assessed with medical needs, including those requiring specialized care or urgent medical attention.

6.4 Large families and single adults

Canada has historically accepted referrals from the UNHCR for cases with varying family composition without restrictions; however, we do ask that any adults who require full-time support due to a medical condition be referred with an accompanying family member.

6.5 Polygamous Marriage

Polygamous marriages are not legal in Canada and are an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada.



A spouse is not a member of the family class if the spouse or sponsor was already married to another person at the time of the subsequent marriage [R117(9)(c)(i)]. This regulation prohibits a second (or third, etc.) wife or husband from being recognized as a spouse within the family class and provides that only the first marriage may be recognized for immigration purposes.

For the first marriage to be recognized as legally valid under Canadian law, the couple must live together in a monogamous marriage in Canada. Common law imparts that a polygamous marriage can be converted into a monogamous marriage provided that the couple live together in a monogamous relationship from the time of arrival in Canada. This conversion can be done if the couple states their intention to convert their marriage to a monogamous one, followed by some factual evidence that they have complied – usually by divorcing the other spouses and/or by a remarriage in a form that is valid in Canada.

When refugee applicants have been practising polygamy and there are children from several spouses, officers caution the principal applicant and the spouse that other spouses will not be eligible for immigration to Canada even if their respective children are included in the application. Officers must explain that separation of children from their mothers or fathers will likely be permanent, and counsel the applicants to consider the consequences of the separation on the children.

For more information, please refer to: [Processing spouses and common-law partners: Assessing the legality of a marriage - Canada.ca](#).

6.6 Other

- Explain any other case composition scenarios which involve special considerations.

7. Dossier Selection Processing

Cases submitted on a dossier basis do not involve resettlement country selection interviews. Acceptance decisions are based on the documentation submitted by UNHCR. If the programme does not include dossier selection processing indicate “N/A.”

7.1 Dossier Selection Policies

Interviews are conducted in most cases. In addition to verifying the identity and eligibility of refugee applicants, interviews are used to elicit detailed family composition and background information, ask statutory questions, obtain authorizations that are not included in the UNHCR Resettlement Registration Form (RRF), and collect biometrics. A migration officer may determine that an interview is not required where sufficient information is available to render an eligibility and admissibility decision.

When deemed safe by the migration office, applicants may be asked to complete biometric enrolment at one of Canada’s Visa Application Centres.

In emergency cases where an urgent protection need has been identified, it may be possible to waive the usual requirement for an interview and biometrics. In these cases, it is important that the claim for protection be well recorded, detailed and documented (when possible).



7.2 Additional Information

- Provide any other relevant information.

8. Interview Selection Processing

Resettlement country interview selection processing means that the resettlement country conducts an interview as part of the selection process. If the programme does not include a resettlement country interview indicate "N/A."

8.1 Interview Selection Policies

Applicants will normally be interviewed by a migration officer who will determine whether the applicant meets Canadian eligibility and admissibility criteria. Video conferencing may also be used when an interview is required, and it is the only viable means to do so due to country conditions, such as safety or security issues.

If a refugee meets the eligibility criteria, a medical examination is requested and must be carried out prior to issuance of permanent resident visa. Criminality and security screening also takes place at this time. The final decision to approve or reject an applicant will be made by the migration officer based on the results of the interview, medical examination, and criminality and security checks. If an application is refused, the applicant will be informed of the negative decision and a letter outlining the reason(s) for the refusal will be sent to the applicant.

8.2 Additional Information

- Provide any other relevant information.

9. Processing Timeframes

9.1 Policies for receiving emergency and/or urgent submissions

The Urgent Protection Program (UPP) enables Canada to provide rapid resettlement for refugees in urgent need of protection because of immediate threats to life, liberty or physical safety. The UPP corresponds to UNHCR emergency priority referrals. Medical emergencies do not qualify for the UPP.

UNHCR emergency referrals are submitted directly to the migration office that covers the area where the refugee resides. The migration office will then inform the UNHCR within 24 hours whether they are able to respond to the emergency request. Where IRCC is unable to provide immediate protection, the referral organization is notified so that resettlement to another country may be considered.

Vulnerable Cases ("Urgent Cases" in UNHCR terminology):

Canadian migration officers may determine a refugee to be vulnerable, meaning the person has a greater need of protection than other applicants because of particular circumstances that give rise to a heightened risk to their physical safety or well being. The vulnerability may result from circumstances such as lack of protection normally provided



by a family or a medical condition. If the UNHCR submits a case as “urgent” priority, the migration office will give consideration to whether processing can be expedited due to the applicant’s vulnerability.

9.2 Average Processing Times for Emergency Cases

The Urgent Protection Program includes two expedited streams: UPP and UPP-Lite.

Canada aims to process UPP cases from submission to departure within one week where this is logistically feasible. Migration offices maintain close contact with UNHCR on UPP cases. The UNHCR may also refer UPP-Lite cases to Canada which will be processed from submission to departure within four months.

For all resettlement applications, Canada’s preference is to complete processing to permanent resident visa issuance. When it is not possible to complete all requirements overseas within the prescribed timelines, a migration office may issue a Temporary Resident Permit instead. The Temporary Resident Permit document allows a refugee to travel to Canada as a Protected Temporary Resident before all the statutory (medical, security, and criminality) checks have been completed. The refugee will undergo medical and background checks in Canada. The refugee may then be granted permanent resident status once the necessary requirements are met.

9.3 Average Processing Times for Urgent Cases

Processing times for applications vary greatly among migration offices depending on their geographic location, caseload inventory, medical and health issues prevalent among particular refugee populations, processing capacity and communication infrastructure. The following link provides information on general processing times for applications, including for UNHCR referred cases:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/times/perm/ref-government.asp>

9.4 Average Processing Times for Normal Cases

Processing times for applications vary greatly among migration offices depending on their geographic location, caseload inventory, medical and health issues prevalent among particular refugee populations, processing capacity and communication infrastructure. The following link provides information on general processing times for applications, including for UNHCR referred cases:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/times/perm/ref-government.asp>

9.5 Additional Information

- Provide any other relevant information.

10. Pre-departure Arrangements



10.1 Pre-departure Medical Screening

Refugees must pass a medical examination with a panel physician designated by the Government of Canada. A medical officer employed by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada then assesses the results of the medical examination. Canada does not admit applicants who suffer from a medical condition which is likely to be a danger to public health (i.e., active tuberculosis, untreated syphilis) or safety. If applicants are diagnosed with a condition that would be a danger to public health, they are required to receive and complete treatment before entering Canada. When further tests indicate they no longer pose a danger to public health, their cases can be approved for visa issuance and travel to Canada.

Under the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP), resettled refugees, as well as certain other groups (e.g., some public policy groups), are eligible for certain pre-departure medical services provided by panel physicians, panel radiologists and secondary providers (i.e., hospitals and laboratories) who are registered with the IFHP claims administrator, Medavie Blue Cross. These services include coverage of the immigration medical examination, follow-up treatment of certain health conditions that may render the refugee inadmissible on public health grounds (i.e. active tuberculosis, untreated syphilis), and outbreak management and control activities in the event of a situation of public health concern. Individuals are also eligible to receive certain vaccinations on a voluntary basis, paid for by the IFHP, which are not mandatory for admissibility. As well, if a departmental regional medical officer determines that an individual requires medical support in transit to facilitate safe travel to Canada, the IFHP covers the costs of certain medical services and devices.

10.2 Required Pre-departure Treatment

- Include information about any required pre-departure treatments, including presumptive treatments and cost coverage.

10.3 Pre-departure Orientation

The Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) Program provides visa-ready refugees bound for Canada with orientation prior to their departure. Sessions are provided in the refugee's first language, when possible, or by using interpreters. COA sessions are offered in three formats: in person (half-day to 3 days, more in-depth learning, participants form social connections), telephonic (1 to 2 hours, nonetheless covers most essential information and is the most practical option if participants are in remote or low-tech environments), or virtual (2 to 3 hours, with an emphasis on participants' virtual engagement, and in which participants gain digital skills). COA sessions cover topics such as introduction to Canada, getting ready to travel to Canada, information on the resettlement program they will be benefitting from, the settling-in period, employment, rights and responsibilities, geography and climate, finding a place to live, living in a multicultural society, the cost of living, family life, education, communication and transportation systems, and adaptation to Canada. COA emphasizes the importance of arriving to Canada with realistic expectations.



The Government of Canada has contracted the IOM to deliver COA. Participation is voluntary and free of charge. IOM has developed the O-CANADA mobile app, available in multiple languages, to complement the COA. COA also provides targeted orientation for refugee youth. COA's Youth Refugee Curriculum is a teaching handbook allowing for a customized and tailored curriculum to meet the information needs of youth.

10.4 Travel Arrangements and Documents

Arrangements for travel to Canada are generally made by the IOM in coordination with a migration office. IOM also remains in close communication with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa, which identifies destinations for government-assisted refugees based on available settlement services, presence of relatives, and other factors.

The Immigration Loans program (ILP) provides eligible immigrants, who are mainly refugees selected for resettlement to Canada, with access to funding that would otherwise not be available to them. Most resettled refugees are issued a transportation loan to cover a portion of the cost of their travel to Canada.

The objective of the transportation loan is to provide financial assistance to eligible applicants to cover the costs of transportation for themselves and their beneficiaries from overseas to their place of final destination in Canada. This also includes approved services fees from the IOM as well as other related expenses. Once the applicant is travel-ready, the IRCC migration office provide the IOM the confirmation of Permanent Residence (COPR) and any corresponding travel documents. Using the information on the COPR, the IOM produces a detailed immigration travel costs sheet (TCS) which the applicant will sign in the presence of an IOM representative before departure, whenever possible. Applicants who chose to book their own travel are not issued a transportation loan and would be responsible to arrange and pay for their own transportation costs.

When issuing an immigration loan, a designated officer ensures that the loan applicant is fully aware of and understands the meaning and nature of the loan agreement. The loan applicant's legal responsibilities and obligations, with respect to the terms and conditions for the repayment of the loan, are clearly explained. Loan recipients are expected to repay the interest-free loan in full with consecutive monthly instalments in accordance with the repayment reschedule set out in the Terms and Conditions of the Loan form. Repayment of the loan begins after the 12th month from the issuance of the loan.

Furthermore, the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) sets aside funds to provide contributions to offset the costs associated with transportation loan or assistance loan for exceptionally higher-needs government-assisted refugee and joint assistance sponsorship cases. This is applicable to persons destined to every province in Canada except Québec. Decisions on which cases are granted contributions are made based on individual assessments of each identified case and in consideration of available contribution dollars.

For individuals with medical conditions that require special medical assistance (e.g. assistive devices, necessary medication and medical escorts) to facilitate the travel period immediately after departure from place of origin and prior to arriving in Canada, certain



defined services would be provided. These services would be covered under the Interim Federal Health Program to ensure appropriate care for the refugees while in transit.

All foreign nationals travelling to Canada are issued a permanent resident visa in the form of a generic counterfoil coded for immigration. In the case of refugees who are stateless or cannot obtain passports from their countries of nationality on which the visa can be affixed, a Single Journey Travel Document for Resettlement to Canada can be issued by the migration office. It serves as travel identification and can only be used for the first trip to Canada for entry as a Permanent Resident.

11. Reception and Integration

11.1 Overview

Canada's Resettlement Assistance Program funds income support administered directly by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to government-assisted refugees, including those receiving joint assistance sponsorship and other eligible clients, as well as a range of immediate essential services delivered by service provider organizations (see section 11.5 for details).

Under Private Sponsorship and Blended Visa Office-Referred programs, immediate and essential services are provided by private sponsors. Government-assisted refugees, privately sponsored refugees and refugees resettled under the Blended Visa Office-Referred program are all eligible to access services funded through the Settlement Program in addition to those provided under the Resettlement Assistance Program or by sponsors.

Refugees destined to the province of Quebec have access to the following set of services:

- [Government-assisted Refugees](#) are greeted at the airport by the arrival services of the *Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration*. Throughout the first 12 months in their city of destination, a partner host organization of the Quebec government provides them with resettlement information and support, including how to secure housing, employment, administrative documentation, French language training, etc. Quebec authorities also provide government-assisted refugees with minimum monthly financial assistance to enable them to pay for rent, food and other essential needs.
- [Privately sponsored Refugees](#) are greeted at the airport by their sponsor. This guarantor must honor their contractual responsibilities and obligations regarding the sponsored refugees by meeting their essential needs, providing support in the integration process, and assuming any cost not covered or reimbursed by a public insurance plan or a government program for the first 12 months.

Canada has a continued commitment to refugee settlement and funds programming that supports a 'two-way street' approach that helps immigrants learn about Canadian values while also helping Canadians understand the diverse backgrounds of newcomers. This



approach is underpinned by Canada's inclusive laws, policies and programs. Inclusive legislation includes, inter alia, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, human rights legislation, the Citizenship Act, the Multiculturalism Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and the federal Employment Equity Act.

11.2 Placement

The Government of Canada provides settlement and resettlement services through several hundred IRCC-funded service provider organizations in large and small communities across Canada. Government-assisted refugees are destined to over 30 different communities in Canada, based on the presence of a resettlement assistance program service provider organization. A list of the Resettlement Assistance Program service provider organizations can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-within-canada/government-assisted-refugee-program/providers.html#tbl>. Privately sponsored and Blended Visa Office-Referred refugees are generally destined to the community of their sponsor.

Canada's Settlement Program funds partnerships with more than 500 third-party service provider organizations across Canada which deliver settlement services that support the full participation of newcomers, including resettled refugees and protected persons, in the economic, social, cultural and civic life of Canada. These services are free of charge, voluntary, and accessible to all permanent residents, including resettled refugees. Other orders of government provide complementary integration programs in the areas of education, health, and labour market access.

Settlement services include: information and orientation, to help newcomers make informed decisions about their settlement and better understand Canada's laws and institutions; language training to help newcomers with finding information, jobs and making social connections; employment related services such as job search orientation, employer connections and information about foreign credential recognition pathways; community connections, which foster interaction between newcomers and Canadians and create welcoming institutions and communities; and support services, such as on-site child care, crisis counselling, transportation and supports to persons with disabilities.

A key element in Canada's strategy for integration of refugees is the recognition that these individuals often face multiple barriers to integration and benefit from efforts made to meet these needs. Canada has the benefit of many years of experience resettling refugees from all parts of the world. Providing settlement services for clients facing multiple barriers, including refugees, continues to be a priority to meet the diverse needs of these newcomers to Canada. Targeted programming is in place for newcomer women, children/youth, LGBTQ2 individuals, seniors and families.

11.3 Reception

Upon arrival at a port of entry, refugees are assisted with immigration procedures and inland transportation. Arrangements are also made for overnight accommodation and meals, if required. Government-assisted refugees, who arrive in Canada between mid-October and mid-April are provided with adequate winter clothing. Privately sponsored



refugees and refugees resettled under the Blended Visa Office-Referred program are provided with adequate winter clothing by their sponsors, except in exceptional circumstances where they need to spend time outside before traveling onward to their final destination.

In the province of Quebec, Government-assisted refugees are driven to their city of destination upon arrival, and if necessary, hosted in a hotel for a few days. For the first 12 months post-arrival, representatives of service provider organizations and the *Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration* help the refugees find housing, apply for public healthcare coverage, register for school, open a bank account, obtain furniture, clothes, and other necessities. For more details, see [Information and services for Québec government-assisted refugees](#).

In the cases of privately sponsored refugees, the sponsors are contractually responsible to meet the refugees' essential needs and support them throughout their integration process, from airport arrival until 12 months post-arrival. For more details, see the [Sponsored refugees](#) page of the Quebec government. Furthermore, [Accompagnement Québec](#) is an integration service for immigrants now offered in a version adapted to sponsored refugees. The initiative provides information on housing, healthcare, social services, learning French and more, as well as individualized action plans to help newcomers settle in Quebec.

11.4 Orientation

Pre-departure orientation materials are provided to help newcomers better understand the Canadian way of life and society. Both written and audio-visual materials are used to deliver orientation sessions (ex: COA with the International Organization for Migration, see above).

After arrival in Canada, refugees receive orientation to assist with settlement into their new community through the Resettlement Assistance Program. Topics such as renting accommodation, shopping, telephones, food and cooking, public local transportation, and safety are covered. All refugees are also eligible for assessment through the Needs and Assets Assessment and Referral Services (NAARS), whereby service providers help newcomers to understand their settlement needs and develop a personalized settlement plan to achieve their objectives and facilitate integration into Canada. Ongoing settlement orientation assistance is available from service providers. One-one-one, family and group orientation sessions are available covering topics such as rights and responsibilities, the Canadian legal system, citizenship and many other areas related to life in Canada.

11.5 Support Services

Under the Government Assisted Refugees program, immediate and essential services are delivered by Service Provider Organizations (SPOs), generally within the first 4-6 weeks of a newcomer's arrival in Canada. Activities include the following:



- meeting newcomers at the airport or final destination in Canada
- providing temporary accommodation
- providing basic orientation to Canada, life skills training and financial orientation
- assisting in finding permanent accommodation
- referring to other settlement programs

Under the Private Sponsorship and Blended Visa Office-Referral programs, immediate material needs are met by the refugee's private sponsor, who covers such costs.

11.6 Housing

Temporary accommodation is provided to Government-assisted refugees until permanent housing is secured. In some cases, this accommodation is provided commercially at hotels and motels. In other cases, accommodation is provided from organizations that have reception house services.

Privately sponsored refugees and Blended Visa Office-Referral refugees receive accommodation support directly from sponsors who must secure accommodation for the duration of the sponsorship period.

11.7 Health

Under the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP), the Government of Canada provides limited, temporary healthcare benefits to eligible individuals, including resettled refugees, until they become eligible for publicly-funded insured and non-insured health services. This includes coverage of basic benefits (e.g., physician and hospital services) for three months as a bridge to provincial or territorial health insurance, which may be extended in certain instances where a refugee is unable to transition to their provincial or territorial healthcare program. Coverage also includes supplemental benefits (e.g., dental care, vision care, mental health counselling) and prescription drug benefits for as long as the beneficiary receives income support from the Resettlement Assistance Program (or its equivalent in Quebec), or until the beneficiary is no longer under private sponsorship. This coverage period is typically one year post-arrival.

Physical and mental health promotion activities are available through information and orientation products and/or recreational/community based interventions that promote and foster healthy living.

11.8 Language

Acquisition of language skills in one of Canada's Official Languages, English and French, is crucial for integration into Canadian society. Therefore, instruction in one of Canada's two official languages is available to adult immigrants and refugees through federally and some provincially funded programs. Resettled refugees (who arrive in Canada as Permanent Residents and protected persons) are eligible for free Government of Canada-funded language training in English and French, delivered through Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada (CLIC).



For more information on funded language training offerings, please visit <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/language.asp>.

In addition, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Language Training for Canada video is intended to raise newcomer awareness on the importance of official language skills for settlement and the steps to take to improve them before and after arrival in Canada. The video is available on the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship's web site in English and in French and on the Department's YouTube channel:

- English: <https://youtu.be/s7O924191lk>
- French: https://youtu.be/liWBN_ICdw0
- Arabic: <https://youtu.be/epNZbEuC3YM>

11.9 Education

Elementary and secondary schools fall under provincial jurisdiction. Children are required to attend provincially-funded public schools, mandatorily in French if they are resettled in the province of Quebec. Post-secondary education is not free in Canada, but neither is it restricted to the affluent. There are various scholarships and university student loan programs available. Entrance to colleges and universities is based on a person's educational abilities, as demonstrated through high school grades, and sometimes through equivalent work and/or voluntary experience.

The Settlement Program funds services in elementary and secondary schools to enable successful integration through specialized and culturally adequate support, while raising awareness of settlement issues within the school system and building capacity for institutional change. For example, Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS), is an outreach program in Canada that aims to support newcomer students within the mainstream school system.

11.10 Employment

Resettled refugees, like other permanent residents, are eligible to work legally in Canada immediately after arriving in Canada. Federal employment and training programs are administered by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). Provinces and territories also deliver their respective suite of programs and services. All residents of Canada, including newly arrived immigrants and refugees, have access to labour market programs, services and information, including the Job Bank/Job Match tool.

In addition to these generalized services, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, through its Settlement Program, funds an array of newcomer-focused employment-related services that are delivered by provincial governments and service provider organizations.

During the needs assessment exercise, settlement workers assess the resettled refugee's skills, language knowledge and credentials, and provide them with relevant labour market information and referral to the services explained below. Additional employment-related services targeted at newcomers include, but are not limited to: employment counselling, job search workshops, resume screening and referrals to employers, mentorship and



networking opportunities, internship placements, and preparation for obtaining required equivalences of foreign credentials and/or trade documents. There are also complementary programs funded by provinces and territories.

Another tool to assist in finding employment in Canada is Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's [*Planning to Work in Canada: An Essential Workbook for Newcomers*](#).

A portion of Settlement Program funding is spent on directly engaging with Canadian employers on the benefits of a diverse workforce and matching employers' skills needs to newcomers.

There are also activities in Canada to connect refugees with local support and social networks, to provide opportunities for labour market integration and cross-cultural interaction, as well as to encourage informal practice of language skills. Examples include:

- Opportunities to learn about Canadian ways of life and foster inter-cultural communication and understanding;
- Sports and recreation events, visits to important local sites and cultural celebrations;
- Conversation circles to support language learning;
- Youth leadership, peer support activities, homework clubs and after school programs to develop life skills, community leadership capacity and valuable volunteer experience;
- Mentoring and matching to connect refugees with local support networks, mainstream organizations, and employment-related networks and opportunities; and
- Job placements and internship to provide the "Canadian experience" sought by Canadian employers.

For more information on work in Canada, please consult the following link:

www.workingincanada.gc.ca

11.11 Financial Assistance

The Resettlement Assistance Program funds the provision of income support to Government-assisted refugees as well as other eligible clients, including Blended Visa Office-Referred refugees who receive a combination of Resettlement Assistance Program and private sponsor support, and persons who are admitted to Canada as permanent residents under humanitarian and compassionate grounds and under public policy considerations established by the Minister for compelling humanitarian reasons. The Resettlement Assistance Program offers income support that is generally comparable to social assistance offered by the provinces.

Resettlement Assistance Program's financial assistance for basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, and shelter) is typically available for up to 12 months or until they become self-sufficient, whichever comes first. Assistance may be extended for an additional 12 months for special needs cases, such as cases assessed as a Joint Assistance Sponsorship. In addition, one-time start-up funds are provided to Government-assisted refugees to cover the initial



costs associated with establishing a new home (e.g., furniture, linens, food staples, clothing and other household items).

Blended Visa Office-Referred refugees receive six months of income support from the Government of Canada and six months of financial assistance from the private sponsor.

Privately sponsored refugees receive financial support from their sponsor. The goal of the Resettlement Assistance Program and comparable private sponsorship support is to meet basic needs in support of the ultimate outcome of having resettled refugees live independently in Canadian society.

The Immigration Loans Program (ILP) of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada provides eligible immigrants, who are mainly resettled refugees, with access to funding that would otherwise not be available to them, such as resettlement loans. These are used to cover a number of expenses, including several costs associated with resettlement. Regulatory changes made in 2018 intended to make loans easier for clients to repay; repayments start after 1 year of arrival (IMM0502 / IMM0500) or issuance (R291), repayment period is between 3-8 years, depending on amount of loan (R291), and with zero interest (R293).

11.12 Supporting Specific Needs

The specific needs of Government-assisted refugees are considered when Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Refugee Resettlement Operations Centre determines a final destination within Canada. Whenever possible, survivors of torture or women-at-risk, for example, are resettled to centers with related available support. High needs Government-assisted refugees may have access to financial assistance to cover travel costs associated with resettlement to Canada. In addition, Government-assisted refugees with special dietary requirements due to a health condition may be eligible for an additional allowance as part of their Resettlement Assistance Program monthly income assistance. In circumstances where clients incur costs not covered by income support but that constitute an immediate and essential need, clients may apply for exceptional allowances. These requests are assessed and approved on a case by case basis.

Life skills support for high-needs refugees

Resettlement Assistance Program funds the provision of intensive life skills support to high needs Government-assisted refugees after their arrival and once they have moved into their new community. Life skills workers provide culturally appropriate help with basic life skills in the refugee's own language. Help may also be provided for using appliances, budgeting, Canadian cultural orientation and other needs.

11.13 Family reunification

One of the objectives of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act is to keep families together and where not possible, reunite them in Canada as quickly as possible. In order to facilitate the expeditious reunification of families, the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program allows for the concurrent processing of refugee families if members of the same family are located in separate countries.



At times, however, a family member's whereabouts are not known or conditions in the country of residence will prohibit the application of family members from being processed concurrently with that of the principal applicant. In these cases, the "one-year window" regulations allow separated family members to be resettled under the same class as the principal applicant (i.e., as a refugee) and to apply without the need for a family class sponsorship. Individuals who make a successful claim in Canada and are recognized as a "Protected Person" in Canada also benefit from concurrent processing of family members' applications overseas.

Eligibility

Resettled refugees chosen overseas: For separated family members to qualify for one year window processing, the principal applicant must have identified family members on their application for permanent residence or declared to the Canadian migration office processing their case prior to departure for Canada. In addition, the family members must subsequently submit their own application for permanent residence to the Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa within one year from the date the principal applicant arrived in Canada. It is therefore very important that all immediate family members be identified on the principal applicant's application even if their present location is unknown or they are thought to be deceased. As a result, migration officers abroad counsel refugees at the interview to list all their dependents, including those who are accompanying, non-accompanying, missing (whereabouts unknown), or thought to be deceased.

For more information on this program, please refer to: [One-year window \(OYW\) of opportunity – All provinces except Quebec \(REF-OVS-7-4-1\) - Canada.ca](#)

Extended family members and de facto dependents of resettled refugees do not qualify under the one-year-window provision. However, they may qualify as refugees in their own right or may be sponsored under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program.

Persons granted asylum in Canada: To qualify for concurrent processing of family members' applications overseas, the principal applicant must identify family members on their permanent residence application submitted in Canada. The family members who are not accompanying the principal applicant but who are included on the principal applicant's application for permanent residence may submit an application for permanent residence at a migration office within one year from the date the principal applicant becomes a permanent resident of Canada. It is therefore very important that all immediate family members be identified on the principal applicant's application even if their present location is unknown.

Financial Assistance

In the case of Government-assisted refugees, family members of the principal applicant are not automatically eligible for financial assistance under the Resettlement Assistance Program. Rather, an eligibility assessment based on the total family income will be undertaken by the Department upon the family member's arrival in Canada. Blended Visa Office-Referred refugees are assessed in the same way and receive the same monthly allowances under the Resettlement Assistance Program as Government-assisted refugees



for up to a six month period (other six months provided by the sponsor), except for start-up costs.

In the case of privately sponsored refugees, the migration offices abroad are instructed to ensure that any family members identified on the principal applicant's application have also been included in the sponsoring group's undertaking. If the sponsoring group refuses to add the non-accompanying family members to the undertaking and does not find another sponsoring group for the family members, then the sponsorship application is likely to be refused as the necessary sponsorship supports (including income support) would not be in place.

Family members are entitled to the same travel arrangements and permanent resident status upon arrival in Canada as the principal applicant.

Other immigration channels available for family reunification

Under the Family Class category, a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada (including resettled refugees) can sponsor their spouse, common-law partner, conjugal partner, dependent child (including adopted child) or other eligible relative (such as a parent or grandparent) to become a permanent resident.

For more information on the family class, please consult the following link:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/sponsor/index.asp>

12. References & Resources on resettlement

Relevant resources and references on resettlement have been provided throughout the document. Additional information about Canada's immigration programs can be found here: [Immigration and citizenship - Canada.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigration/canada/canada.html)

Addendum on complementary pathways

World University Service of Canada's Student Refugee Program

- Since 1978, the World University Service of Canada's (WUSC) Student Refugee Program (SRP) has enabled thousands of refugees to be resettled to Canada as permanent residents in order to pursue post-secondary studies at universities and colleges across Canada.
- WUSC, a Sponsorship Agreement Holder, works with its partners on the ground to promote the program, select, interview and prepare the candidates for their departure to Canada. Once students are selected, they follow a pre-departure curriculum (including English or French classes) offered by WUSC and partners to prepare them for studies and resettlement to Canada.
- On arrival in Canada, the student refugees are sponsored by a WUSC 'Local Committee' on their campus, which acts as the organization's Constituent Group, responsible for the financial, social and integration support to the refugee student each year.
- For more information, please refer to: <https://srp.wusc.ca/>

Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP)



- The Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP) was created to help skilled refugees immigrate to Canada through existing economic programs to support Canadian labour market needs.
- The pilot combines refugee resettlement and economic immigration. IRCC provides support to refugees overseas coupled with the applicants' ability to settle independently in Canada using existing economic immigration requirements.
- EMPP applicants will arrive in Canada with permanent residence status as economic immigrants and will be eligible for the full suite of settlement and integration services that are offered to all economic immigrants, including pre-arrival orientation and referral to in-Canada settlement services and supports. However, they are not entitled to refugee resettlement assistance, as they are economic immigrants.
- Further information can be found [here](#) regarding the EMPP.