



SPACE FOR CHANGE

NEWCOMER SETTLEMENT

RESOURCE GUIDE

LGBTQ+ Refugees and Newcomers



Registration for New to Canada settlement services is temporarily unavailable.

Thank you for your interest in The 519's New to Canada settlement services.

We are currently unable to accept new registrations as we are at service capacity. To ensure we maintain the highest level of support for our current clients who rely on our services, registration for new clients is temporarily closed until 2025.

The 519 remains committed to supporting the LGBTQ+ refugee and newcomer communities and look forward to assisting you when capacity allows.

We appreciate your understanding.

In the meantime, we encourage you to explore the resources provided on our website and in the New to Canada booklet.

The 519 Newcomer Settlement Team



THE 519 PROGRAMS AND SERVICES



THE 519: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The 519 is a City of Toronto agency that provides space and support for 2SLGBTQ+ people and communities in the province of Ontario. The 519 is committed to the health, happiness, and full participation of the 2SLGBTQ+ community in Toronto and beyond.

EarlyON Child and Family Centre

Our EarlyON Centre is a supportive space for families of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and configurations and their children to play, talk, learn, and grow with each other including Every Baby Counts (ages 0-12 mo).

Glitterbug is a unique mobile program that works with EarlyON Centres across Toronto to promote inclusion and affirmation of gender and sexual diversity among children and families.

- 🌐 The519.org/eon
- ✉️ Glitterbug@The519.org

Trans Programs

- Meal Trans Drop-in
- Trans People of Colour Project (TPOC)
- Trans ID Clinic
- Trans Youth Mentorship Program (TYMP) for youth aged 16 to 29



2SLGBTQ+ Youth Programs

- Building Power: Youth Advocacy Project (15 to 20 years)
- Black Youth Gathering: For Black newcomers (16 to 29 years)
- Kids Action and Arts Space (KAAS) (6 to 9 years)
- Youth Action and Arts Space (YAAS) (10 to 14 years)

- ✉️ YouthPrograms@The519.org
- 🌐 The519.org/youth


THE 519: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Recurring Programs

- Sunday Drop-in: offers a hot meal and workshops for 2SLGBTQ+ folks of all ages who may be experiencing poverty or are under-housed.
- Monthly Self-Defense Workshops
- Health Justice Hub
- Tax Clinic: virtual clinic for 2SLGBTQ+ communities and Toronto's downtown east
- 'Fostering Queer and Trans-Inclusive Environments at Work and Home' paid monthly workshops
- S&M: Substance Use and Mental Health Support Weekly Group
- Breaking the Ice (BTI)

2SLGBTQ+ Older Adults Programs

- Monday Drop-in
- Knowledge Seekers: Skill Sharing for 2SLGBTQ+ Adults Over 50 on Wednesdays
- Drop-In for 2SLGBTQ+ Folks Over 50 on Thursdays
- Active Minds social afternoons on Fridays

 The519.org/oap






The 519 Legal Clinic

The 519 Legal Clinic provides services to support the diverse legal needs of underserved 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

Programs available:

- Notary and Affidavit Clinic
- Mock Hearing Program for LGBTQ+ Refugee Claimants
- Narrative Support and Writing Program for LGBTQ+ Refugee Claimants
- Casework Support Program- Justice system navigational and advocacy support to BIPOC 2SLGBTQ+ community members
- Trans ID Clinic - Support with gender marker and name change applications
- Public Legal Education Workshops

Legal Advice Clinics - Free one-time 30-minute legal advice consultations in the following areas of law:
Criminal Law, Employment Law, Family Law, Housing Law, Immigration & Refugee, Wills & Estates & General Clinic (human rights, experienced violence, income security)

-  The519.org/a2j
-  LegalClinic@The519.org
-  TransIDClinic@The519.org

THE 519: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Housing Support

Pacewood is the city's first transitional shelter for 2SLGBTQ+ newcomers in Toronto who have arrived through a refugee pathway. The space prioritizes trans, gender-diverse, and non-binary folks. The shelter is funded by the City of Toronto, operated by Homes First Society, and supported by The 519.

Through the Follow-Up Supports Program for 2SLGBTQ+ adults, we offer case management that assists with housing and personal stabilization. For information or referrals email

FollowUp@Toronto.ca

🌐 [The519.org/housing](https://www.the519.org/housing)

☎ 416-392-6874 ext. 4005

Find all our programs at

www.the519.org/programs/

Education and Training

The 519 Education and Training team provides year-round training to organizations of all your sizes. Get the insights, tools, and understanding you need to create environments that are 2SLGBTQ+ inclusive, respectful and welcoming.

We offer consultation, training, and custom education services that are relevant to organizations' context and unique requirements. Be sure to check out other resources and talks offered by the team.

✉ Training@The519.org

🌐 [The519.org/education-training](https://www.the519.org/education-training)



RESOURCES FOR NEW TO CANADA COMMUNITIES



SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION SERVICES

FCJ Refugee Centre

Location: Toronto

Services: Settlement services, legal support, housing assistance, and refugee protection, with specific programming for LGBTQ+ claimants.

- Phone: +1 416-469-9754
- Website: fcjrefugeecentre.org

CultureLink

Location: Toronto

Services: Settlement services, employment programs, youth engagement, and newcomer support, including LGBTQ+ programs.

- Phone: +1 416-588-6288
- Website: culturelink.ca

Matthew House Toronto

Location: Toronto

Services: Transitional housing, settlement support, and community integration for refugee claimants.

- Phone: +1 416-203-7848
- Website: matthewhouse.ca

The Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples

Location: Toronto

Services: Settlement, legal, and community services for Spanish-speaking newcomers, including LGBTQ+ support.

- Phone: +1 416-533-8545
- Email: info@spanishservices.org

Centre Francophone du Grand Toronto

Location: Toronto

Services: Settlement services, health care, legal aid, and social services for French-speaking newcomers, including LGBTQ+ individuals.

- Phone: +1 416-922-2672
- Email: infoSNA@centrefranco.org

SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION SERVICES

Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto (MCC Toronto)

Location: Toronto

Services: Faith-based support, advocacy, and peer support services for LGBTQ+ refugees.

- Phone: +1 416-406-6228 ext 125
- Email: refugeepeersupport@mcctoronto.com
- Website: mcctoronto.com

Marginalized Majority Collective

Location: Toronto

Services: Advocacy and support for marginalized communities, including LGBTQ+ refugees.

- Phone: +1 437-246-7309
- Email: marginalizedmajoritycollective@gmail.com

HOUSING AND SHELTER SUPPORT

Fife House

Location: Toronto

Services: Housing and support services for people living with HIV/AIDS, including LGBTQ+ refugees.

- Phone: +1 416-205-9888
- Email: info@fifehouse.org

Maggie's Toronto

Location: Toronto

Services: Support, advocacy, and community programs for sex workers, including LGBTQ+ refugee claimants.

- Phone: +1 416-964-0150
- Email: info@maggiesto.org
- Website: maggiesto.org

Emergency Shelters

If you need immediate shelter, you could contact Central Intake for a Shelter. The phone number for Central Intake is 1-877-338-3398.

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Better Life Counselling

Location: Toronto

Services: Professional mental health support and counseling services.

- Phone: +1 416-859-6917
- Website: betterlifecounselling.com

Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT)

Location: Toronto

Services: Legal support, counseling, and settlement services for survivors of torture, including LGBTQ+ refugees.

- Phone: +1 416-363-1066 / Toll-Free: 1-877-292-2288
- Website: ccvt.org

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services

Location: Toronto

Services: Health services, mental health support, and settlement assistance, including LGBTQ+ refugee programs.

- Phone: +1 416-324-8677
- Email: talktous@accessalliance.ca
- Website: accessalliance.ca

Sherbourne Health – Mental Health Counselling

Location: Toronto

Services: Mental health counseling, group therapy, and individual support for LGBTQ+ individuals and newcomers.

Contact:

- Phone: +1 416-324-4100
- Website: sherbourne.on.ca

WoodGreen Community Services

Location: Toronto

Services: Health care services, housing support, and wellness programs for LGBTQ+ individuals and other marginalized communities.

- Phone: +1 416-645-6000
- Email: info@woodgreen.org

SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES

Planned Parenthood Toronto (PPT)

Location: Toronto

Services: Sexual health services, including birth control, STI testing, counseling, and LGBTQ+ health services.

- Phone: +1 416-961-0113
- Website: ppt.on.ca

Hassle-Free Clinic

Location: Toronto

Services: Sexual health clinic providing STI testing, treatment, HIV testing, and sexual health counseling for all genders, including LGBTQ+ individuals.

- Phone: +1 416-922-0566
- Website: hasslefreeclinic.org

People with AIDS Foundation (PWA)

Location: Toronto

Services: Practical support services for people living with HIV/AIDS, including LGBTQ+ individuals, housing, food programs, and financial assistance.

- Phone: +1 416-506-1400 ext. 205
- Website: pwatoronto.org

Asian Community AIDS Service (ACAS)

Location: Toronto

Services: HIV/AIDS prevention, education, and support services for Asian LGBTQ+ individuals, newcomers, and people living with HIV.

- Phone: +1 416-963-4300
- Website: acas.org

AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT)

Location: Toronto

Services: HIV prevention, care, and support services for people living with HIV/AIDS, including LGBTQ+ individuals.

- Phone: +1 416-340-2437
- Website: actoronto.org

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

FrancoQueer

Location: Toronto

Services: Support and services for French-speaking community.

- Phone: +1 647-709-2600
- Email: info@francoqueer.ca
- Website: francoqueer.ca

Rainbow Connect

Location: Toronto

Services: Support, networking, and resources for LGBTQ+ newcomers.

- Phone: +1 416-829-7820
- Email: nicholas.manyan@tngcs.org

LesBond: Asian Queer Women Migrants Support Project

Location: Toronto

Services: Peer support, advocacy, and resources for Asian queer women migrants, including refugees.

- Email: lesbondinfo@gmail.com

Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention (Black CAP)

Location: Toronto

Services: HIV prevention, support, and outreach for Black communities and people living with HIV/AIDS.

- Phone: +1 416-977-9955
- Website: blackcap.ca

Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP)

Location: Toronto

Services: HIV/AIDS education, prevention, and support for South Asian communities.

- Phone: +1 416-599-2727
- Website: asaap.ca

Latinos Positivos

Location: Toronto

Services: HIV/AIDS support and advocacy for the Latinx community.

- Website: latinospositivos.ca

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) SERVICES

YMCA of Greater Toronto

Location: Toronto

Services: ESL classes, language training, and newcomer support programs.

- Phone: +1 416-925-5462
- Website: ymcagta.org

Newcomer Women's Services Toronto

Location: Toronto

Services: ESL classes, employment support, and settlement services for immigrant women.

- Phone: +1 647-639-5587
- Website: newcomerwomen.org

FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (FSL) SERVICES

YMCA of Greater Toronto

Location: Toronto

Services: FSL classes, language training, and support for French-speaking newcomers.

- Phone: +1 416-502-2484
- Website: ymcagta.org

Collège Boréal

Location: Ontario (Multiple Locations)

Services: FSL programs, language courses, and training for French-speaking individuals.

- Phone: +1 1-800-361-6673 / +1 416-289-5130
- Website: collegeboreal.ca

YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES

Supporting Our Youth (SOY)

Location: Toronto

Services: Health care, social services, community programs, and support for LGBTQ+ youth.

- Phone: +1 416-324-4100
- Website: soytoronto.com

Friends of Ruby

Location: Toronto

Services: Housing, mental health services, and support for LGBTQ+ youth, with a focus on youth experiencing homelessness.

- Phone: +1 416-359-0237
- Email: info@friendsofruby.ca
- Website: friendsofruby.ca

LGBTQ+ Youth Line

Location: Ontario-wide (Virtual)

Services: Peer support, crisis intervention, and resources for LGBTQ+ youth across Ontario. Available via phone, text, or online chat.

- Phone: 1-800-268-9688
- Text: +1 647-694-4275
- Chat: youthline.ca

The Studio at Lumenus

Location: Toronto


Services: Arts-based programming, mental health services, and community outreach for LGBTQ+ youth and young adults.

- Website: lumenus.ca
- Facebook: The Studio at Lumenus

LGBT YouthLine

Location: Ontario-wide (Virtual)

Services: Peer support, information, and resources for LGBTQ+ youth, with a focus on mental health and community well-being.

- Phone/Text: +1 647-694-4275
 - Email: askus@youthline.ca
 - Website: youthline.ca
- 

CRISIS SUPPORT AND HELPLINES

Assaulted Women's Helpline

Location: Ontario-wide

Services: 24/7 helpline offering crisis support, safety planning, and referrals for women experiencing violence.

- Phone: +1 416-863-0511
- Toll-Free: 1-866-863-0511 / 1-866-863-7868
- Website: awhl.org/online-chat

Canada Suicide Prevention Service

Location: Canada-wide

Services: 24/7 crisis intervention and suicide prevention helpline for individuals in distress.

- Phone: 1-833-456-4566
- Text: 45645
- Website: crisisservicescanada.ca

Talk 4 Healing

Location: Ontario (for Indigenous women)

Services: Culturally sensitive crisis support for Indigenous women.

- Phone: 1-855-554-4325
- Chat: talk4healing.com/need-help

Trans Lifeline

Location: Canada

Services: Peer support and crisis intervention for transgender individuals, including LGBTQ+ refugees.

- Phone: 877-330-6366
- Website: translifeline.org

Good2Talk

Location: Ontario

Services: 24/7 confidential helpline offering support for post-secondary students, including LGBTQ+ youth.

- Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Text: GOODTOTALKON to 686868
- Website: good2talk.ca

CRISIS SUPPORT AND HELPLINES

Gerstein Crisis Centre

Location: Toronto

Services: 24/7 crisis support, including in-person and phone services for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.

- Phone: +1 416-929-5200
- Website: gersteincentre.org

Distress Centres of Greater Toronto

Location: Toronto

Services: 24/7 crisis support, mental health services, and suicide prevention.

Phone: +1 416-408-4357

Text: 45645

Website: torontodistresscentre.com

Important Numbers for the City of Toronto

Call **8-1-1** to connect with a registered nurse for free, secure and confidential health advice, 24/7

Call **2-1-1** to find social services, financial assistance programs, or community supports, 24/7

1-866-531-2600 ConnexOntario Addiction and mental health treatment services information, 24/7

In an emergency call **9-1-1**

SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT SERVICES

Toronto Rape Crisis Centre/Multicultural Women Against Rape

Location: Toronto

Services: 24/7 crisis line, counseling, and advocacy for survivors of sexual violence.

Contact:

- Phone: +1 416-597-8808
- Website: trccmwar.ca

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

5343 Dundas Street West, 3rd Floor, Toronto, ON M9B 6K5

55 St. Clair Avenue East, Suite 200, Toronto, ON M4T 1L8
(by appointment only)

IRCC Call Centre: 1-888-242-2100

Website: www.ircc.canada.ca

Office hours: 8 am – 4 pm, Monday to Friday

Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)

CBSA Greater Toronto Enforcement Centre
6900 Airport Road Entrance 2B, Mississauga, ON L4V 1E8
Telephone: 1-800-461-9999

CBSA Toronto
74 Victoria Street, 10th floor, Toronto, ON M5C 2A5
Telephone: 416-952-0708

Website: www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca
Office hours: 8 am – 4 pm, Monday to Friday

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada Refugee Protection Division (IRB-RPD)

74 Victoria Street, Suite 400, Toronto, ON M5C 3C7
Telephone: 416-954-1000
Fax: 416-954-1165
Website: www.irb-cisr.gc.ca
Office hours: 8 am – 4 pm, Monday to Friday

YOUR REFUGEE CLAIM PROCESS



WHAT IS 2SLGBTQ+?

2SLGBTQ+ is a term that includes different groups of people based on their **sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression**. Let us break it down:

- **2S:** Stands for **Two-Spirit**, a term used by some Indigenous peoples in North America to describe a person who embodies both masculine and feminine qualities.
- **L: Lesbian** - Women who are attracted to other women.
- **G: Gay** - Men who are attracted to other men, but it's also a term used more broadly for anyone attracted to the same gender.
- **B: Bisexual** - People attracted to more than one gender.
- **T: Trans*** - An umbrella term for individuals whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Q: Queer or Questioning** - Queer is an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities, and Questioning is for those who are exploring their own identity.
- **+**: Represents the many other identities and expressions that may not be explicitly mentioned in the abbreviation.

So, 2SLGBTQ+ is a way to include a diverse range of identities and orientations beyond just lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. It is about recognizing and respecting the diversity within the community.



WHAT IS SOGIE?

SOGIE stands for **Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression**. Let us break it down in simple terms:

- **Sexual Orientation:** This is about who you are attracted to romantically or sexually. For example, someone might be attracted to people of the opposite gender (heterosexual), the same gender (homosexual), or multiple genders (bisexual).
- **Gender Identity:** This is about how you personally feel and identify your own gender. Some people identify as male, some as female, and others as a different gender.
- **Gender Expression:** This is how you show your gender to the world through your behavior, clothing, hairstyle, or other characteristics. It is about how you express your identity to others.



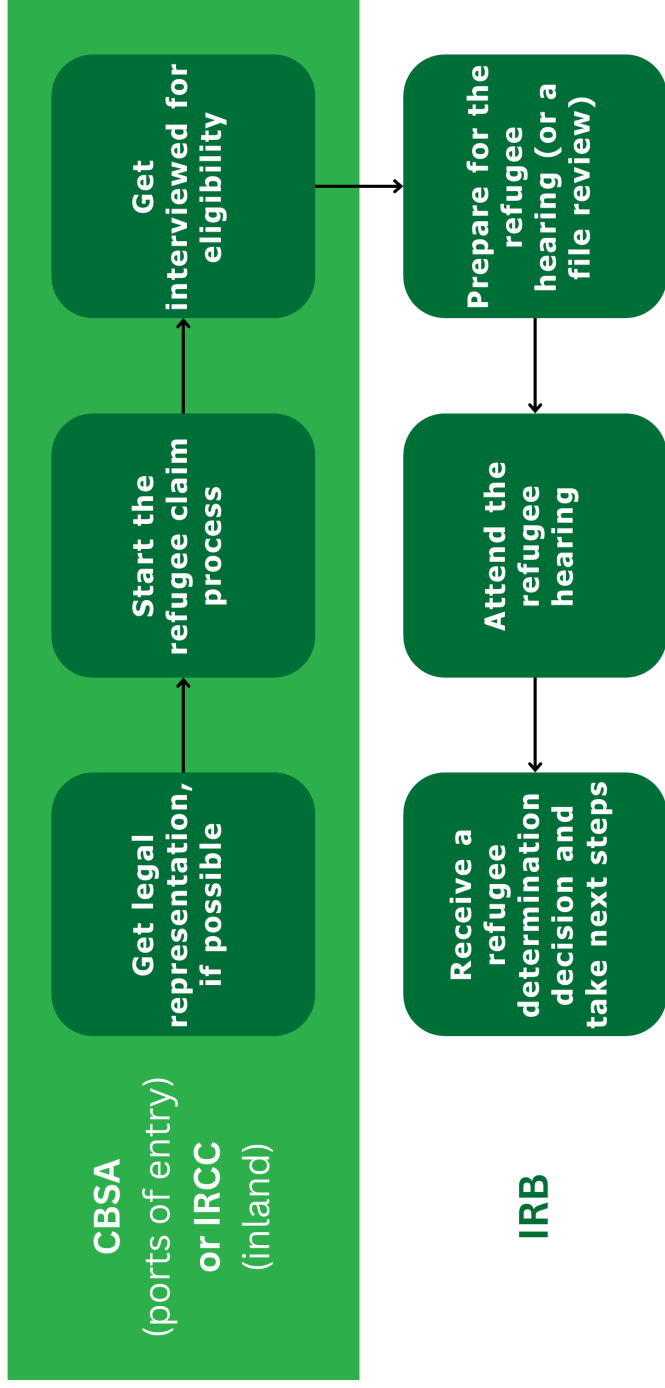
THE REFUGEE CLAIM PROCESS

In Canada, when someone asks for refugee protection, they have to tell a detailed story about why they are afraid of being persecuted in their home country. This story goes to the Immigration and Refugee Board, where they check if it is credible and valid. If it is accepted, the person gets to stay in Canada and is considered protected.

Other resources include:

- [Welcome to My Refugee Claim](https://myrefugeeclaim.ca/en/) - myrefugeeclaim.ca/en/
- [Making a claim](https://irb.gc.ca/en/applying-refugee-protection/Pages/index.aspx) - irb.gc.ca/en/applying-refugee-protection/Pages/index.aspx

JOURNEY MAP OF THE REFUGEE CLAIM PROCESS



ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO HELP YOUR REFUGEE CLAIM

1

GET INFORMED

Getting informed means learning about the process and information related to your refugee claim. It's an action refugee claimants can take to improve their chances of success.

- Know the Process
- Understand Your Rights
- Gather Information
- Seek Legal Help
- Stay Updated

2

GET CONNECTED

Getting connected means reaching out and building a support network to help improve their chances during the refugee claim process. Strengthen your social network by connecting with people who can help you through your refugee claim journey

3

GET PREPARED

Getting prepared means doing things to help your case when you are asking for refugee protection. Here are some steps you can take:

- Gather Important Documents
- Tell Your Story Clearly
- Fill Out Forms Correctly
- Be Honest and Open
- Get Legal Help

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE LAWYERS

Battista Migration Law Group

416-203-2899

reception@migrationlawgroup.com

Rebeka Lauks

647-805-3550

rebeka@laukslaw.com

Ashley Fisch

647-805-0750

afisch@afalawyers.ca

Eric Chang

647-805-0750 x102

echang@afalawyers.ca

Kareem Ibrahim

1-877-618-9861

kareem@kareemibrahimlaw.ca

Mary Akhbari

416-668-1103

akhbarilawoffice@gmail.com

Daniel Radin

416-553-7890

danielradinlaw@gmail.com

El-Farouk Khaki

416-925-7227

info@elfaroukkhaki.ca

Aadil Mangalji

416-850-7167

aadil@imlawgroup.com

Carlos Vera

carlosvlaw@gmail.com

Christian Julien

416-988-8853

cjulien@kingwelllaw.com

Lewis and Associates

416-924-2227

hello@lewislegal.ca

Adrienne Smith

647-365-1895 or 647-365-1801

smith@smithimmigrationgroup.com

Anisha Nag

416-300-2211

anisha@anishanaglaw.com

Alex Verman

365-605-5810

lawyer@alexverman.com

Legal Aid Ontario

416-979-1446

www.legalaid.on.ca

Refugee Law Office

416-977-8111

Law Society of Ontario

416-947-3300

416-644-4886

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the processing time for the Refugee Claim Process?

Processing time on average no more than 24 months. Be patient - Waiting is a normal part of making a refugee claim. You might have to wait to have your hearing or wait to learn if your claim is accepted.

How do I get a lawyer or legal representative?

As a refugee claimant, you have the right to be represented by counsel (a lawyer or other professional representative) at your own expense during the refugee claim process, except not always during initial intake at a port of entry. If you cannot afford to pay for counsel, you can apply to a provincial or territorial legal aid office for assistance.

If you have already started your claim and do not have a lawyer or legal representative, make every effort to contact someone for help.

It is strongly advised that you have a lawyer or legal representative throughout your refugee claim process, and at your refugee hearing.

When will I get my decision?

After your refugee hearing, the IRB Member will:

- Tell you their decision immediately, or
- Send their decision in the mail.

There is no standard time for a Member to make their decision. If your decision is delayed, it does not mean your refugee claim will be denied.

Can I work?

To work legally in Canada, you must have a work permit and a Social Insurance Number (SIN).

How do I get a SIN?

When you get your work permit, you must then apply for a Social Insurance Number. You can do this online, by mail, or in person at a Service Canada Centre.

Information on the application process can be found at www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin.html.

To find a local Service Canada Centre, call 1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I get a work permit?

If you make your claim at a port of entry. You can request to apply for a work permit while you're with the border services officer. You won't get your work permit while at the port of entry. If you're eligible for one, you'll receive it after you complete your medical exam.

If you submit your refugee claim online. You can request a work permit in your online application. IRCC will only issue you a work permit if

- we decide your claim is eligible to be referred to the IRB and
- you complete your medical exam

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- we decide your claim is eligible to be referred to the IRB and
- you complete your medical exam

What is IFHP?

The Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) is a way for the Canadian government to provide temporary health care coverage to certain groups of people who are not eligible for provincial or territorial health insurance plans. This includes individuals like refugee claimants, refugees, and some other specific groups.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I know if I am eligible for IFHP?

Your Acknowledgement of Claim or Refugee Protection Claimant Document indicates if you are eligible for IFHP coverage.

All eligible claimants have access to health-care services and products anywhere in Canada from any healthcare provider who is registered with the IFHP.

What is Ontario Works (OW)?

Ontario Works is a social assistance program offered by Toronto Employment and Support Services (TESS), designed to provide financial and employment assistance to individuals and families in need. Receiving social assistance through Ontario Works can help you meet their basic living expenses, such as housing, food, and other necessities, while you await a decision on their refugee claim. Individuals in this situation should contact local social services offices for guidance on the application process and eligibility requirements.

What is the Immigration Medical Examination?

As a refugee claimant, you must undergo a mandatory medical exam. This is paid for by the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP).

Only certain doctors may perform these medical exams.

Instructions and a link to a list of doctors who do these exams on behalf of IRCC in each province or territory are provided on the Medical Report form.

Please contact a doctor from the list to make an appointment for a medical exam. You must bring the following documents to the appointment:

- the Medical Report form and
- your Acknowledgement of Claim or Refugee Protection Claimant Document

How do I contact IRCC?

By IRCC's Web Form:
secure.cic.gc.ca/enquiries-renseignements/canada-case-cas-eng.aspx

By phone: 1-888-242-2100,
Monday to Friday from 8 am to 4 pm local time, except for statutory holidays.

New to Canada
Support for Refugees and Newcomers

NewToCanada@The519.org

437-253-7112

THE 519

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A City of Toronto Agency

Registered charity (119310761-RR0001)