

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

Glossary of Key Terms

Asylum/Refugee Claimant

A foreign national seeking protection at an in-land office or at a port of entry.

Border Services Officer (BSO)

Officers of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), a federal government agency, who have the legal authority to decide who can enter and remain in Canada. These officers have many of the same powers as police officers, including the right to conduct searches, make arrests, and seize documents or goods.

Blended Visa Office-Referred Program (BVOR)

The Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program matches refugees identified for resettlement by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) with private sponsors in Canada. IRCC, in consultation with the Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) community, will identify the populations that can be sponsored through the BVOR Program.

Community Sponsor (CS)

An organization that sponsors refugees but has not signed a formal agreement with IRCC. A community sponsor would normally sponsor fewer refugees than a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH).

Constituent Group (CG)

A group authorized in writing by a sponsorship agreement holder (SAH) to sponsor refugees under the SAH's sponsorship agreement. An example of a Constituent Group is a local congregation or chapter of a national church or organization that is a SAH.

Convention Refugee (CR)

A person who is outside of their home country or country where they normally live and fears returning to that country because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion.

Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR)

A person who is outside Canada and has been determined to be a Convention refugee and who receives financial and other support from the Government of Canada or Province of Quebec for up to one year after their arrival in Canada. GARs are selected from applicants referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other referral organizations.

Group of Five (G5)

A group of five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents, each of whom is at least 18 years of age, who agree to work together to sponsor a refugee.

Interim Federal Health Program (IFH)

The Interim Federal Health Program provides all resettled refugees with coverage for the following, until provincial health insurance is available: essential and emergency health services for the treatment and prevention of serious medical conditions; the treatment of emergency dental conditions; contraception, prenatal and obstetrical care, eye wear; and approved prescription medications.

Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)

Under the JAS program, refugees receive support from the government and a private sponsor for up to 24 months, depending on the case. In a few cases, the private sponsor may provide support for up to 36 months. These refugees get income support from the Government of Canada for food, shelter, clothing and basic household goods. They are also matched with a private sponsorship group. The sponsorship group helps refugees adjust to life in Canada by providing settlement help and emotional support.

Matching Centre (MC)

The Matching Centre determines the destination for government-assisted refugees. It works with CIC visa offices abroad and with IRCC's regional and local offices to determine which city will best suit each refugee's needs, based on the language they speak, where family and friends live in Canada, ethnic, cultural and religious communities in the area, medical needs and availability of settlement services. Once a city has been chosen, the Matching Centre informs the visa office, travel arrangements for the refugee are made, and arrival details are shared with local IRCC offices, ports of entry, service-providing organizations and sponsoring groups (if applicable) to help officials prepare for the refugee's arrival.

Permanent Resident (PR)

A person who has legally immigrated to Canada but is not yet a Canadian citizen.

Privately Sponsored Refugee (PSR)

A person outside Canada who has been determined to be a Convention refugee who receives financial and other support from a private sponsor for one year after their arrival in Canada. Private sponsors are Sponsorship Agreement Holders, Groups of Five or Community Sponsors.

Protected Temporary Resident (PTR)

A person admitted to Canada on a temporary resident permit because a Canadian visa officer abroad has determined that they face an immediate threat to their life, liberty or physical safety.

Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)

The Resettlement Assistance Program provides immediate and essential support to GARs who are selected overseas on the basis of their need for protection through Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program. RAP (which is separate from the Settlement Program) provides a bridge to mainstream settlement and integration services that are available to all newcomers. Under RAP, GARS are provided with immediate resettlement assistance, orientation services and income support upon arrival in Canada. Financial support is administered by IRCC and delivered directly to clients, while services such as assistance at reception centres, the provision of temporary accommodation, help in finding permanent housing and orientation to life in Canada are provided by SPOs through Contribution Agreements.

Resettlement Program

Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement program selects refugees and persons in refugee-like situations overseas on the basis of their need for protection. There are two streams of resettlement: 1. The Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) program provides government-funded assistance upon arrival in Canada through RAP. 2. The Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program is a volunteer-based initiative and generally does not involve contribution funds or contribution agreements. Instead, the Department enters into non-financial agreements with sponsoring organizations.

Settlement Program

The Settlement Program assists immigrants, including refugees, to overcome barriers specific to the newcomer experience, such as a lack of official language skills and employment skills. With a limited knowledge of Canada, newcomers may also experience some barriers in participating in social, cultural, civic and economic life in Canada. To help newcomers overcome these barriers, services such as language training, community and employment bridging, settlement information and support services are offered to facilitate their settlement.

Service Provider Organization (SPO)

A service provider organization is an agency that provides services for newcomers to Canada. Service provider organizations offer programs that can give newcomers resources and training to live and work in Canada. Their programs can help refugees who often have a difficult time with day-to-day tasks like finding an apartment, taking public transportation, or making a doctor's appointment. These organizations can also help refugees complete forms, get permanent resident cards, health insurance, social insurance numbers, etc. They also offer interpretation and translation services to help with such special needs as giving medical backgrounds to doctors.

Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH)

An incorporated organization that signs an agreement with IRCC to sponsor refugees abroad. A SAH can authorize other groups in the community to sponsor refugees under its agreement. These groups are known as 'constituent groups'.

Temporary Resident (TR)

A foreign national who is in Canada legally for a short period. Temporary residents include students, foreign workers and visitors, such as tourists.

Women at Risk Program (AWR)

The Women-at-Risk Program is designed to offer resettlement opportunities to women in perilous or permanently unstable situations, and in situations where urgent or expedited processing is necessary.