

# Foundations of Settlement Work in Ontario



# About OCASI

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OCASI - The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants is a registered charity governed by a volunteer board of directors. Its membership is composed of more than 200 community-based organizations in the province of Ontario.

OCASI was formed in 1978 to act as a collective voice for immigrant and refugee serving agencies and to coordinate responses to shared needs and concerns.

Visit [www.ocasi.org](http://www.ocasi.org) to find out more.

# Acknowledgements

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# Foreword

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Many organizations and individuals have used OCASI's training guide *Immigrant Settlement Counselling* as a resource and a reference since it was published in 1990 and updated in 2000. In 2018, OCASI proudly released a brand new, comprehensive resource inspired by that manual: a two-part online course, *Foundations of Settlement Work in Ontario*, available at no cost on [learnatwork.ca](http://learnatwork.ca), in facilitated and self-directed versions in English and French.

This book is based on the content of that course. Part 1 covers history, policy, and laws pertaining to immigration to Ontario, while Part 2 addresses the basics of the immigrant and refugee-serving sector, the nature of settlement work, and ways to support newcomers in working through common barriers and challenges to their successful integration.

With a relatively small and aging population, Canada depends on immigrants to maintain its workforce and tax base, and gains immeasurably from the global perspectives that newcomers can provide on the economic, social, cultural, and environmental issues that define our lives. The full benefits of immigration can be realized only if immigrants and refugees can participate fully and equitably in economic, social, and political life. We must also be mindful of the responsibility of everyone in Canada to build respectful relationships with the Indigenous peoples on this land, including by dismantling harmful colonial laws and practices, and redressing historical wrongs.

OCASI believes it is crucial that people who work in support of immigrants, refugees, and people with precarious immigration status in Canada understand the factors that determine who is here and why, and the reasons that settlement and integration are relatively easy for some but extremely challenging for others. We are pleased to offer this source of historical context, valuable information, and resources to practitioners in the immigrant and refugee-serving sector, and to the larger community as well.

Emily Mooney  
Coordinator, Settlement Guide Content Development  
November 2018

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## CHAPTER 1

# Canada: A History of Settlement and Immigration



## Learning Outcomes

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Upon completion of Chapter 1, you will be able to:

- Explain why the knowledge in this chapter is important
- Describe the history of Canadian settler colonialism and immigration in general terms
- Demonstrate awareness of the Indigenous peoples in Canada and the treaty obligations to them



## § Section 1

# Why Learn the History?

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To understand how to support newcomers as they settle in Canada, you must first understand what kind of country we live in. Why do some immigrants settle in easily, while others have a very hard time?

## Canada's Cultural Mosaic

Some say Canada is a “cultural mosaic,” a model of successful multiculturalism that other countries should envy. This idea is appealing, but it does not tell the whole story. Canada's official recognition of the rights of cultural communities to preserve their own language and heritage is largely symbolic. Different groups experience the educational systems, government bureaucracies, and the justice system very differently. Knowing some history will help you understand why.

## Canada's Nation of Immigrants

Although one in every five Canadians was born outside the country, and the vast majority of the population can trace their history back only a few generations on this land, the notion that Canada is a “nation of immigrants” erases necessary truths. This nation was established through a process of settler colonialism that has been working to destroy the Indigenous nations and cultures that have been here for thousands of years, in order to claim ownership of the land and resources for use by European settlers.

You can learn more about who is in Canada and why by searching online for “Canada immigration history.”

# Settler Colonialism vs. Immigration

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Canada is a settler colonial nation, not an immigrant one. The main principles underlying the structures and institutions originated in Europe, not here. Settler colonists and their descendants are not immigrants.

Two other groups of people in Canada are not immigrants either: the Indigenous peoples, the first peoples and traditional stewards of this land; and the descendants of enslaved people, primarily Africans, who were brought here by force before the slave trade was banned in the British Empire in 1834.

The “nation of immigrants” cliché is well-intended, but it erases a history of violence that Canada must not ignore. As immigrants and settlement workers, we need to understand this history, and how colonialism and systemic racism still affect the dynamics of relationships with Indigenous peoples. We must also recognize our responsibilities and obligations to them.

<b>Immigration</b>	<b>Settler colonialism</b>
The process of moving to a country to live there with permission from that country’s government, and entering through a controlled point of access	The process of occupying land in order to destroy the existing society and replace it with that of the colonizing power (Wolfe, 2006)
Exists within the laws and regulations of a country’s recognized government	Disrupts or erases a place’s existing culture and society to replace it with the culture and society of the newcomers
Intended to meet the economic and social needs of the existing country	Intended to meet the economic and social needs of the settler colonists, and often their countries of origin
Based on the assumption that newcomers will learn the local language and adjust to the culture	Based on the assumption that the newcomers’ language and culture will become dominant, and the local languages and culture will disappear

## § Section 2

# Who Came When?

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The following timeline provides a brief history of the presence of various groups in Canada, with particular attention to Ontario. This information is not intended to be comprehensive, and you do not need to remember all of it; instead, it is here to give you context and get you thinking about the roots of Canada's ethnic diversity.

## Timeline: Settlement & Immigration

### ••••○ Before 1600

Indigenous Peoples, including the Anishinaabe, Cree, and the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy, lived in dozens of nations throughout Ontario. You can read about the [history of Indigenous peoples](#)<sup>1</sup> from the settler colonist perspective, but [oral histories](#)<sup>2</sup> directly from Indigenous people themselves provide a much more complete picture of these times. It is important to listen to their stories and build relationships with Indigenous communities.

### ••••○ 1600s

- Explorers from western Europe, primarily England and France, began moving into Ontario by waterways such as the St. Lawrence River and Hudson Bay.
- English and French people claimed various parts of Ontario for their countries
- Armed conflicts and wars took place among English, French, and Indigenous peoples, with different nations taking opposite sides in the colonial conflicts
- The Hudson's Bay Company was incorporated by British royal charter in 1670; it was once the largest landowner in the world, holding title to 15% of North America

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1 [goo.gl/fVU9zh](http://goo.gl/fVU9zh)

2 [goo.gl/QX9hQ2](http://goo.gl/QX9hQ2)

## 1700s

- Wars continued among the English, French, and Indigenous peoples.
- **1763:** The Treaty of Paris granted Britain possession of the land that France had claimed. This was the first time decisions were made about Indigenous people in Canada without their involvement.
- **1774:** Britain annexed what is now southern Ontario to Quebec.
- **1782-1784:** About 33,000 people left the newly established United States for Canada, including about 7,500 who settled in what is currently southern Ontario.
  - Chief and council system was imposed on Indigenous communities
  - 5,000 were white United Empire Loyalists
  - 500 were enslaved people
  - 2000 were Indigenous allies, mostly Haudenosaunee from New York State
  - There were also free Black people and those who escaped slavery here, although some from this group returned to Africa.
- **1784:** Upper Canada was the first province in the entire British Empire to abolish the slave trade, but people already enslaved were not freed. See: [Black Enslavement in Canada](#)<sup>3</sup>
- **1791:** Quebec was divided into “the Canadas”: Upper Canada (now southern Ontario) and Lower Canada (now southern Quebec and Labrador).

## 1800s

- **1815-1865:** Tens of thousands of African Americans arrived in Upper and Lower Canada by way of the Underground Railroad, a secret network of routes and safe houses established by abolitionists to help people who were enslaved in the United States escape to freedom.
- **1815-1850:** The Great Migration of Canada happened, with more than 800,000 newcomers arriving, primarily from Britain, the United States, and China. About 60% were British, looking for work because the Industrial Revolution had cost them their jobs.
- **1830-1880:** There was a large influx of German immigrants, with many Mennonites settling in the Kitchener-Waterloo area and German immigrants who had planned to go to the United States settling instead in the upper Ottawa Valley.

- **1834:** The slave trade was banned throughout the rest of the British Empire, but people who were already enslaved in Canada did not gain their freedom. Many remained in slavery until they died.
- **1869-1939:** 80,000-100,000 poor British "home children"<sup>4</sup> were sent to Canada without their families; some were treated well, but others were essentially indentured servants and were mistreated badly. Up to 10% of Canada's current population is descended from this group.
- **1881-1884:** Some 17,000 Chinese workers arrived first from the United States, and then directly from China, to complete the western section of the Canadian Pacific Railway.
- **1891-1914:** Over three million people arrived in Canada from continental Europe, with 400,000 arriving in 1913 alone (the highest number of new immigrants ever to come to Canada in one year).
- **1896:** Sir Wilfrid Laurier's newly elected government established an immigration policy aggressively recruiting agricultural immigrants from England, the United States, and central and Eastern Europe, including Ukrainians, Scandinavians, and Doukhobors. The English immigrants tended to stay in the cities. Although the others settled mostly in western Canada, not Ontario, these communities were among those who have had a strong influence on Canadian policy, lobbying the federal government for official multiculturalism rather than English and French biculturalism.

## 1900s

- **1913:** 400,000 new immigrants arrived in Canada, the highest number ever admitted in a single year. Nearly 40% of these were British.
- **1914:** The Komagata Maru<sup>5</sup>, a ship full of economic migrants from the British colony of India, was turned away from the port of Vancouver and forced to return to South Asia with 352 of its passengers still aboard.
- **1915:** Only 34,000 landed immigrants arrived in Canada.
- **1928-1971:** Pier 21 in Halifax received millions of immigrants to Canada.
- **1939:** Over 900 Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany on the ship MS St. Louis<sup>6</sup> were turned away from Cuba and the United States, and the Canadian government refused to consider admitting them. The ship returned to Europe, where 254 of the refugees were murdered in concentration camps.

4 [goo.gl/SNUonr](http://goo.gl/SNUonr)

5 [goo.gl/FUqenf](http://goo.gl/FUqenf)

6 [goo.gl/b5KeUB](http://goo.gl/b5KeUB)



- **1946:** The Canadian government tried to deport 10,000 Japanese Canadians to Japan. Protests took place across the country, but 4,000 were still expelled, including about 2,000 Canadian citizens.
- **1956-1957:** 37,500 refugees arrived from Hungary.
- **1960s:** Immigration from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean rose sharply.
- **1965-1975:** Up to 40,000 Americans (“draft dodgers”) fled to Canada to avoid being sent to fight in the Vietnam War.
- **1970s:** Immigration from Europe fell by more than 50%.
- **1975-1985:** 60,000 refugees were resettled in Canada from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. This was the first time that Canada allowed for the private sponsorship of refugees.
- **1980s:** 85,000 immigrants arrived from Bermuda and the Caribbean.
- **1985:** Britain began the process to return Hong Kong to China by 1997, leading to an influx of economic immigrants to Canada.
- **1999:** 11,200 refugees were airlifted to Canada from Kosovo.

## 2000s

- **2006:** 20% of Canada’s population was born outside the country. Between 2000 and 2010, 800,000 immigrants arrived from the People’s Republic of China, India, and the Philippines.
- **2010:** 492 asylum seekers from Sri Lanka arrived on the [MV Sun Sea](#). Most were detained for months because of concerns about human smuggling, and suspicion that the migrants were members of the Tamil Tigers, branded a terrorist group. The Conservative government used the [MV Sun Sea](#)<sup>7</sup> as justification for new regulations making it far more difficult for “irregular arrivals” to claim refugee status in Canada
- **2011:** China and India passed Great Britain as the most commonly reported country of birth for people born abroad.
- **2015-2016:** More than 40,000 refugees were resettled in Canada from Syria.

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7 [goo.gl/4eZqR7](http://goo.gl/4eZqR7)

# Reflection: Canada's Ethnic Diversity

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1. Does anything surprise you about this history? Why?
2. Can you think of any reasons why the countries of origin and ethnicities of immigrants might have changed so dramatically in the second half of the 20th century?
3. Have you seen the changing demographics affect your work? How?

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## § Section 3

# Socio-Demographics

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As of 2016, 7.5 million residents of Canada had arrived in the country as immigrants or refugees. This made up 21.9% – more than one in five – of the total population. 60.3% were economic immigrants, 26.8% were joining family members already in Canada, and 11.6% were refugees. The proportion of foreign-born Canadian residents was higher only in 1921, when 22.3% had been born outside the country.

**Resources:**

[Welcome to Canada: 150 years of immigration: goo.gl/cuXJqN](https://www.goo.gl/cuXJqN)  
[Gateways to immigration in Canada: goo.gl/1ydP25](https://www.goo.gl/1ydP25)



**Distribution of foreign-born population, by region of birth, Canada, 1871 to 2036:**

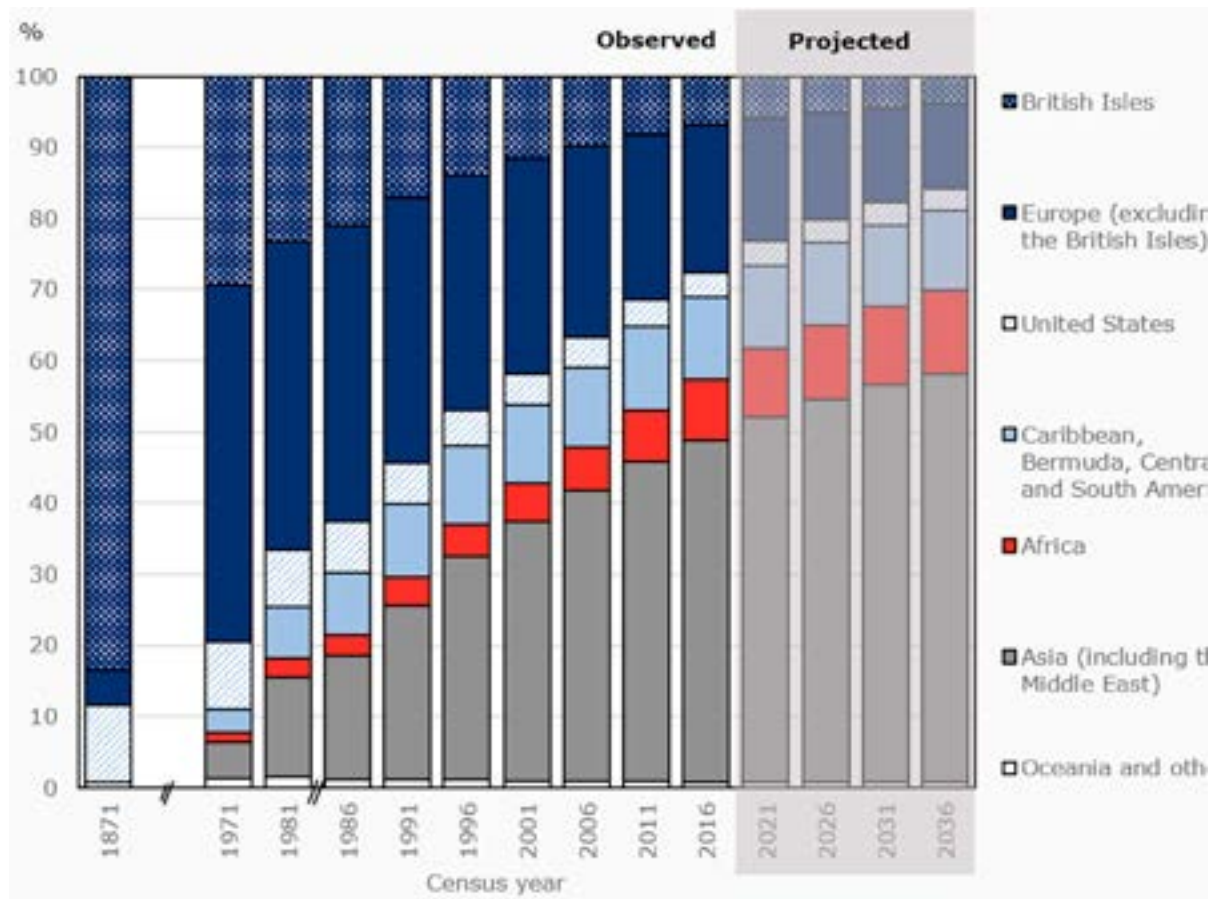
Go to [goo.gl/TEbo1Q](http://goo.gl/TEbo1Q) to see the chart from Statistics Canada that shows more about how the distribution of regional origins has changed.

Over time, there has been a dramatic shift in the countries of origin for Canada’s foreign-born population.

The 1871 Census revealed that 88.4% of Canada’s immigrants had come from Europe (83.6% from the British Isles). By 1971, this percentage had dropped to 61.6%; by 2016, it was 11.6%.

As European immigration to Canada has dropped sharply, the arrival of newcomers from other parts of the world has made the country far more diverse.

The 2016 Census found that the most common places of origin for recent newcomers are Asia (including the Middle East), at 61.8%, Africa, at 13.4%, and the Americas, at 12.6%.



# Top Countries of Origin

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The following data from Statistics Canada<sup>8</sup> shows the top ten countries of origin of recent immigrants and refugees (between 2011 and 2016), as reported on the 2016 Census.

	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Recent immigrants	1,212,075	100.0
Philippines	188,805	15.6
India	147,190	12.1
China	129,020	10.6
Iran	42,070	3.5
Pakistan	41,480	3.4
United States	33,060	2.7
Syria	29,945	2.5
United Kingdom	24,445	2.0
France	24,155	2.0
South Korea	21,710	1.8
Other countries	530,195	43.7

## Origins of Refugees

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The data from the previous table does not differentiate between immigrants and refugees. In 2016, Canada accepted 46,700 refugees, a national record and the highest number since the resettlement of 40,271 refugees, most from Indochina, in 1980.



According to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), the top five countries of origin for refugees to Canada in 2016 were as follows:

## Reflection: Top Countries of Origin

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- Are these numbers consistent with the origins of the people you see in your work?
- What are some of the implications for settlement and integration over the longer term?

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## Ethnicity and “Visible Minorities”

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The Canadian population reported over 250 ethnic origins or ancestries on the 2016 Census. Those who have been here for several generations were more likely to report multiple ethnicities, with “Canadian” as the most common. Only 15% of the people reporting European origins were born outside Canada. In contrast, 70% of the people who reported Asian origins were foreign-born.



**The top 20 ethnic origins reported to Statistics Canada:**

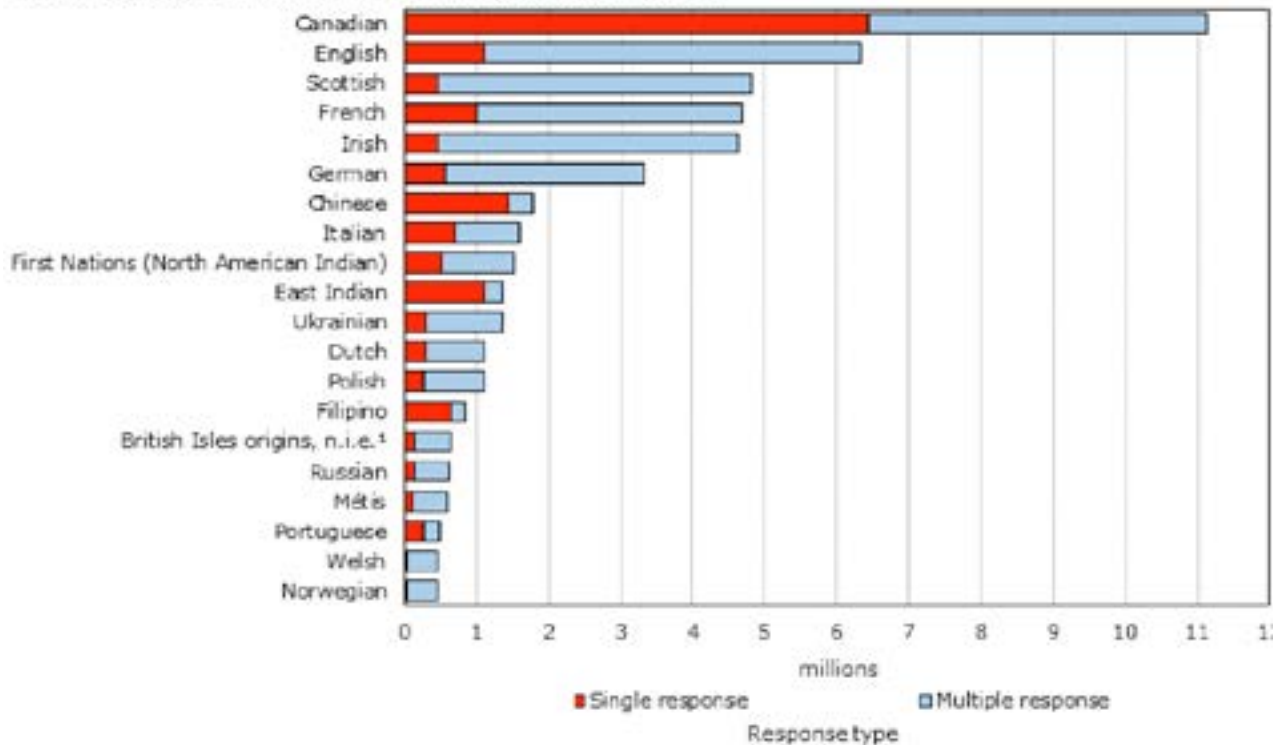
[goo.gl/wwAzPo](http://goo.gl/wwAzPo)

Members of a “visible minority,” as defined by the Employment Equity Act, are “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.” In 2016, 7,674,580 people, or 22.3% of the population, were identified as members of visible minorities. Of these, 7 in 10 were born outside Canada.



**Chart 1**

**The top 20 ethnic origins reported alone or in combination with other origins (single or multiple response), Canada, 2016**



## “Visible Minorities” or “Racialized Groups”?

There is controversy about the use of the term “visible minority.” In 2007, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination released a report about Canada’s efforts to wipe out racism and live up to its commitment to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The UN Committee noted that the phrase “may not be in accordance with the aims and objectives of the convention.” The [Ontario Human Rights Commission](#) instead recommends the terms “racialized person” and “racialized group”<sup>9</sup> instead, to reflect the social processes that construct differences among people.

# Connections to Indigenous Peoples

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To many newcomers, the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada may not be well known. Many newcomers may not know that they are responsible for upholding treaties – the agreements between settler colonial governments and Indigenous nations. Given the images of Indigenous people in popular culture, many who did not grow up in the Americas are surprised to learn that the land's First Peoples are still here at all.

There are more than 600 First Nations, as well as the Inuit and the Métis, in Canada today. They have distinct cultures and languages, and their histories are long and complex.

## Residential Schools

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Since the 1600s, Canada has enacted many policies and strategies in an effort to assimilate Indigenous peoples, and eradicate their languages and their cultures. One of the worst examples of this was Canada's residential school system. More than 150,000 Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and sent to government and church-run schools. These institutions were schools in name only, and children were subjected to sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. At least 6,000 children are recorded as having died in residential schools, but because of destroyed or poorly kept records, it is estimated the actual number of deaths may be as high as 50,000. The last residential school did not close until 1996.

The impacts of residential schools are still felt in Indigenous communities today, and the trauma has been passed down from generation to generation. Canada's residential school system has been recognized as an act of cultural genocide by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

# Truth and Reconciliation

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In 2008, the Prime Minister of Canada made an official Statement of Apology to the former students, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established to investigate and address the legacy of the system. The Commission published its [final report](#)<sup>10</sup> in 2015, including [94 calls to action](#)<sup>11</sup> for all three levels of government.

Three of these calls to action are especially relevant to settlement work.



### **Call to action #57:**

We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.



### **Call to action #93:**

We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including Calls to Action and information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.

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10 [goo.gl/X1RPWa](http://goo.gl/X1RPWa)

11 [goo.gl/L3ePCU](http://goo.gl/L3ePCU)

**Call to action #94:**

We call upon the Government of Canada to replace the Oath of Citizenship with the following:

*“I swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada including Treaties with Indigenous Peoples, and fulfill my duties as a Canadian citizen.”*

## Myths about Indigenous Peoples

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There are many myths about what Indigenous peoples receive from the federal government. Some people believe that having “Indian status” means free housing, free education, and no taxes, but this is not accurate, as Chelsea Vowel, Métis writer and lawyer, explains in detail in *Indigenous Writes* (2016).

These myths are similar to what some people who oppose immigration say about newcomers.

## We Are All Treaty People

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Canadian governments have signed treaties with various Indigenous nations about the ownership and use of the land and its resources. There are 46 treaties and other agreements that cover Ontario; these were all signed between 1781 and 1930.

As Chelsea Vowel points out, treaties establish relationships, and relationships cannot be ignored. They must be renewed, and this renewal takes work. All residents of Canada, including immigrants and refugees, are treaty people, responsible for upholding and renewing these sacred agreements.



**Learn about the Rights and responsibilities under Canada's treaties:**

**Wampum Belts:** Treaty making was not a settler convention. Many Indigenous nations entered into treaties with each other prior to colonial contact in the form of wampum belts ([goo.gl/Vyhk2B](http://goo.gl/Vyhk2B)). Wampum Belts are just as significant and must be upheld in the same way as written treaties. Examples of wampum belts include the Dish with One Spoon and the Two-Row Wampum.

To learn more about this perspective visit We Are All Treaty People ([goo.gl/DofjCx](http://goo.gl/DofjCx)) an Indigenous education resource by Jean-Paul Restoule ([goo.gl/LrdyYy](http://goo.gl/LrdyYy)).

**Indigenous territories:** Nearly every part of North America is the traditional territory of one or more Indigenous nations. It is important to know on whose land you are standing. You can use the web based app Whose Land? to learn about this. [www.whose.land](http://www.whose.land)

## Reflection: We Are All Treaty People

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1. What do you see as the role of settlement workers in reconciliation?
2. How will this knowledge affect your work with newcomers?  
Give examples of how you will use this information.
3. How would you introduce newcomers to Indigenous groups in your area?

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In this chapter, we have looked at the history of settler colonization and immigration in Canada, and the relationships with Indigenous peoples. The next chapter will cover Canadian immigration law and policy, and the forces that have shaped them.

## Sources and Further Reading

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### Who Came When?

- [Canadian Megatrends: 150 years of immigration in Canada](#)<sup>12</sup>, Statistics Canada.
- [A hundred years of immigration to Canada 1900-1999](#)<sup>13</sup>, Canadian Council for Refugees - This comprehensive timeline focuses on refugees and discrimination.
- [Timeline of colonization](#)<sup>14</sup> and [Timeline of immigration](#)<sup>15</sup>, The Canadian Encyclopedia
- [100 Years of Immigration in Canada](#)<sup>16</sup>, Monica Boyd and Michael Vickers
- [Canada: A History of Refuge](#)<sup>17</sup>, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. 2015.

### Ethnicity and “Visible Minorities”

- [Term ‘visible minorities’ may be discriminatory, UN body warns Canada](#)<sup>18</sup>, CBC News.

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12 [goo.gl/ztt2KD](http://goo.gl/ztt2KD)

13 [goo.gl/1mgtcu](http://goo.gl/1mgtcu)

14 [goo.gl/McVnXL](http://goo.gl/McVnXL)

15 [goo.gl/NZ4K6M](http://goo.gl/NZ4K6M)

16 [goo.gl/VuBfgm](http://goo.gl/VuBfgm)

17 [goo.gl/H3cZTA](http://goo.gl/H3cZTA)

18 [goo.gl/LXh4JM](http://goo.gl/LXh4JM)

## Connections to Indigenous Peoples

- [Indigenous Issues 101](#)<sup>19</sup>, Chelsea Vowel (*âpihtawikosisân*)
- [Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada](#)<sup>20</sup>.

This is an excellent, engaging resource with primers about history and common myths. The author has collected many of these pieces into an important book.

## Residential Schools

- [Residential Schools](#)<sup>21</sup>, The Canadian Encyclopedia.
- [Where Are the Children? Healing the Legacy of Residential Schools](#)<sup>22</sup>

## Additional Resources

- [Statistics Canada](#)<sup>23</sup>
- The Canadian Encyclopedia: [Indigenous Peoples in Canada](#)<sup>24</sup>
- [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#)<sup>25</sup>
- University of Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education: [We Are All Treaty People](#)<sup>26</sup> (e-learning course)

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19 [goo.gl/VEdDno](https://goo.gl/VEdDno)

20 [goo.gl/9sUafv](https://goo.gl/9sUafv)

21 [goo.gl/CEyimL](https://goo.gl/CEyimL)

22 [goo.gl/Pj6vNP](https://goo.gl/Pj6vNP)

23 [goo.gl/itiawi](https://goo.gl/itiawi)

24 [goo.gl/F1nKHE](https://goo.gl/F1nKHE)

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26 [goo.gl/R5JRWo](https://goo.gl/R5JRWo)

## CHAPTER 2

# The Evolution of Canadian Immigration Law and Policy



Photo credit: Library and Archives Canada. Head Tax Certificate for Lee Shing Dok.

## Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of Chapter 2, you will be able to:

- Describe how Canadian immigration law and related policy have evolved since Confederation
- Understand Canada's history of racial discrimination in immigration law
- Start thinking about how recent changes to federal and provincial immigration policies and programs have affected settlement work

CONTROLLER OF CHINESE IMMIGRATION.

## § Section 1

# Federal Policies and Regulations

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As you read the next few pages, about laws and policies that the Canadian government has enacted to regulate immigration, ask yourself the following questions:



- Who was welcome? Why?
- Who was not welcome? Why not?
- Whose interests was the government protecting?

## 1869: The First Immigration Act

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This law was passed two years after Confederation. It was mostly to protect immigrants from Europe during their passage and after their arrival. It established an open immigration policy intended to foster settlement of the West, but it authorized immigration agents to bar the entrance of people with obvious mental illness, intellectual disability, or physical disability, and people living in poverty.

## Racial Discrimination in Canadian Immigration Law

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Before 1962, many Canadian immigration laws and policies discriminated on the basis of race or national origin. The following timeline shows the history of Canada's institutional discrimination.



## Timeline: Racial Discrimination in Canadian Immigration

- ○ **1885: Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration**
  - Intended to regulate the large number of Chinese immigrants who came as labourers to build the railway
  - Considered Chinese to be “immoral, prone to disease, and incapable of assimilation”
  - Recommended a \$10 duty (about \$250 in 2017 dollars) to be imposed on each Chinese person entering Canada
- ○ **Chinese Immigration Act (amended 1887, 1892, 1900, and 1903)**
  - First (of many) Canadian regulations to exclude people because of ethnicity
  - Imposed \$50 duty, or “head tax,” on each Chinese person entering Canada (raised to \$100 in 1900 and \$500 in 1903)
- ○ **1902: Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration**
  - Convened to address concerns about growing numbers of Asian people in Canada, particularly British Columbia
  - Deemed Asians “unfit for full citizenship ... obnoxious to a free community and dangerous to the state”
- ○ **1906: Immigration Act**
  - Introduced restrictions on immigration and a framework to regulate deportation
  - Established government powers to make quick judgements about entry at the border
- ○ **1908: Gentlemen’s Agreement (Hayashi-Lemieux Agreement)**
  - Informal agreement whereby the Japanese government limited the number of Japanese immigrants to Canada to 400 annually
  - Result of rising anti-Asian settlement and a 1907 riot in western Canada, specifically against the railway workers

### 1908: Continuous Journey Regulation

- Required immigrants to come on a direct ticket from their country of origin without stopping anywhere on the way
- Effectively blocked immigration from India and Japan

### 1910: Immigration Act

- Gave the government more power and discretion to deny entry to people deemed “unsuitable” to the Canadian climate (Black people), and “charity cases” (poor British people) who did not have written permission to leave their country
- Gave the Minister exclusive power to make decisions about immigration
- Added more categories to the list of prohibited immigrants
- Enabled deportation for “political or moral instability”

### 1911: Order-in-Council PC 1911-1324

- Explicitly banned the entry of “any immigrants belonging to the Negro race, which is deemed unsuitable to the climate and requirements of Canada.” This was a direct response to a group of Black farmers who wanted to leave Oklahoma and move to the Canadian Prairies. This order may not have been enforced, but it clearly shows the government’s priorities

### 1914: Naturalization Act

- Established strict rules for becoming naturalized in Canada as a British subject: five years’ residency, good moral character, and knowledge of English or French
- Provided no recourse for appealing decisions

### War Measures Act

- Allowed internment (detention) of “enemy aliens,” including recent immigrants from Eastern Europe and others considered too “foreign”

### 1919: Immigration Act amendment

- Passed as a response to rising post-war unemployment and anti-foreign sentiment
- Blocked entry of immigrants from “enemy” countries

- Increased restrictions on political dissidents and members of conservative Christian “Peace Churches” (Schwinghamer, n.d.)<sup>1</sup>
- Gave governor-in-council (the Cabinet) power to block immigration based on race, nationality, occupation, class, or culture

### 1922: Empire Settlement Act

- Agreement among Britain and several Commonwealth countries to facilitate the immigration of agriculturalists (scientists specializing in farming), farm workers, domestic helpers, and juveniles from Britain
- Provided money to Canada to help with settlement
- Expected to bring millions of people, but only 165,000 arrived

### 1923: Chinese Immigration Act

- Placed severe restrictions on eligibility for Chinese immigrants
- Reduced Chinese immigration to a total of 15 people between 1923 and 1946

### 1925: Railway Agreement

- Enabled Canadian Pacific Railway and Canadian National Railway to recruit labourers from “non-preferred” nations (central and eastern Europe)
- Cancelled in 1930 by new government because of high unemployment rates

### 1931: Order-in-Council PC 1931-695

- Tightest restrictions on immigration in Canadian history
- Allowed only British and American citizens with enough money, farmers with enough money, and wives and dependent children of Canadian residents

### 1947: Canadian Citizenship Act

- Established that all residents of Canada, regardless of birthplace, could obtain Canadian citizenship rather than remain British subjects
- Set criteria for obtaining and losing citizenship
- Repealed the Chinese Immigration Act

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1 [goo.gl/65KapW](http://goo.gl/65KapW)

### 1952: Immigration Act

- Reinforced existing policies, especially those giving the governor-in-council (the federal cabinet) discretion to bar immigrants on the basis of nationality, ethnicity, perceived unsuitability, or cultural customs
- Created a legislative framework for further regulation of immigration
- Gave broad power to the Minister of Immigration to make final decisions about immigration cases

### 1957: Order in Council PC 157-11/848

Established the Interim Federal Health Program, providing access to medical and dental care and hospitalization for immigrants

## Reducing Racial Discrimination in Canadian Immigration Law

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In 1962, the federal government banned overt racial discrimination in its immigration policies, and in 1967 they introduced the “points” system, designed to assess job skills and educational qualifications, not ethnicity or national origin. The following timeline shows how Canada changed its immigration laws to reduce discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnicity.

### Timeline: Racial Discrimination in Canadian Immigration

#### 1962: Immigration Regulations, Order-in-Council PC 1962-86

- Prohibited overt racial discrimination in immigration policy
- Made skill into the main criterion for admission, rather than race or nationality
- Enabled all citizens and permanent residents to sponsor certain relatives
- Restricted the sponsorship of adult children and extended family to immigrants from “preferred nations”



••••• ○ **1967: Immigration Regulations, Order-in Council PC 1967-1616**

- Implemented the recommendations in a 1966 report that emphasized attracting skilled immigrants and restricting entry of unskilled labourers by reducing sponsorships
- Set up the “points” system for evaluating admissibility based on “education, occupational skills, employment prospects, age, proficiency in English and French and personal character” (Pier 21 site<sup>2</sup>)

••••• ○ **1971: Canadian Multiculturalism Policy**

- Intended to preserve cultural freedom and recognize the cultural contributions of diverse groups within a bilingual framework
- Was established on the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, to address concerns of minority groups that they were being ignored
- Was mostly symbolic: the government provided few resources to implement it

••••• ○ **1976: Immigration Act**

- Explicitly stated the objectives of Canadian immigration policy
- Defined refugees as a distinct class
- Created new categories of immigrants: independent, humanitarian, family, and assisted relatives. Only independent class immigrants were evaluated under the points system.
- Required the federal government to consult with provinces and territories about planning and management

••••• ○ **1982: Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**

- Declared fundamental freedoms of thought, belief, religion, conscience, association, expression, and peaceful assembly, as well as legal rights in interactions with the justice system, for all persons in Canada regardless of citizenship
- Officially recognized Canadian multiculturalism

### 1988: Canadian Multiculturalism Act

- Resulted from the influx of newcomers from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East
- Acknowledged cultural diversity as a central element of Canadian society
- Emphasized people’s right to preserve and share their cultures and participate fully and equitably in Canadian society

### 1990: Federal Integration Strategy

- Characterized immigration as a “two-way street,” noting that immigrants need support to adapt to the dominant culture, but those from the dominant culture also need support in understanding the cultures of their new neighbours.

### 1994: Department of Citizenship and Immigration Act

- Established the federal Department of Citizenship and Immigration (now Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada)
- Laid out the powers and duties of the Minister of Immigration

## Current Canadian Immigration Law

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Canada’s current immigration laws and policies exist within a guiding legal framework that protects multiculturalism and the rights of immigrants and refugees:

- Canada’s official multiculturalism policy of 1971
- The recognition of multiculturalism in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982)
- The Multiculturalism Act (1988)
- The Singh Decision<sup>3</sup> in 1985 applying Charter rights to everyone on Canadian soil, regardless of citizenship or immigration status

Even though this framework exists, there have been many laws passed and decisions made by the courts that go against the rights of immigrants and refugees.

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3 [goo.gl/fcrEHF](http://goo.gl/fcrEHF)

# Changing Priorities and Tightening Rules

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After the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, the government of Canada passed the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act<sup>4</sup> to replace the 1976 Immigration Act.


The new law kept many of the same frameworks (such as the classes of immigrants and refugees and the points system), and it made common-law and same-sex partners eligible for spousal sponsorship.

However, it also strengthened the government's authority to arrest, detain, and deport landed immigrants suspected of being threats to Canadian security. Most of the people affected by these changes have been Muslims and Arabs.

## Safe Third Country Agreement

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The Safe Third Country Agreement, made with the United States in 2002, requires that asylum seekers make their refugee claims within the first "safe" country they arrive in, and do not use that country as just a stop on their way to another destination.

**Read more about the agreement:**

[www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/laws-policy/menu-safethird.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/laws-policy/menu-safethird.asp)

This agreement prohibits refugee claimants from entering Canada through border checkpoints from the United States. However, it does not prohibit people who cross the border in other places from making refugee claims once they have arrived in Canada. This loophole has led

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4 [goo.gl/xfJrcM](http://goo.gl/xfJrcM)

tens of thousands of migrants, especially Haitians, to enter Canada from the US since the 2016 US Presidential election and a rising climate of xenophobia, racism, and Islamophobia.

## Shifting Policies: Economy and Security

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The 2006 Federal election marked a shift in Canadian immigration policy. The new government said that they wanted to protect the Canadian economy and national security. These were some results of the laws they passed.

- It became harder for vulnerable people from certain countries to stay in Canada
- People from certain countries were denied health care while they waited to find out if they could stay
- Immigration policies and government programs were designed to address short-term economic needs, not long-term integration of newcomers. One effect of this was that the number of people present in Canada on temporary work permits skyrocketed from 13,996 in 1995 to a peak of 110,619 in 2009.
- Acceptance rates for refugees dropped sharply, as did applications for refugee status
- The numbers of migrants, including children, in detention increased, with families separated by gender, and refugee claimants incarcerated indefinitely with general prison populations
- 100,000 backlogged applications, representing about 280,000 people, were rejected without notice and returned unread to the applicants in 2012

## Closing the Doors to Vulnerable People

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Below is a brief summary of the laws that enacted these changes.

## Timeline: Closing the doors to vulnerable people

### •••• ○ **2008: Legislative and policy changes, including amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act**

- Emphasized making the immigration system more flexible and able to meet the needs of the labour market
- Expanded the Temporary Foreign Worker Program
- Added the Canadian Experience Class to the economic immigration category, for people who had already been living and working in Canada
- “Modernized” the approach to settlement services, requiring funded agencies to report how their projects contribute to one of five areas: orientation to Canada, language and skills, access to the labour market, fostering welcoming communities, and developing policy and programs (Seidle, 2010)

### •••• ○ **2010: Balanced Refugee Reform Act<sup>5</sup>**

- Created a list of “designated countries of origin” (DCOs) “that do not normally produce refugees and respect human rights and offer state protection.”
- Fast-tracked refugee claimants from these countries, reducing their chances of a fair hearing

### •••• ○ **2012: Protecting Canada’s Immigration System Act<sup>6</sup>**

- Authorized the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to:
- designate people as “irregular arrivals” and keep them in detention indefinitely
- establish, without consultation, a list of “safe countries” deemed unlikely to produce refugees
- deny refugee claimants from the “safe” countries the right to appeal decisions by the Immigration and Refugee Board
- Allowed for deportations of people from the safe country list who were waiting for federal judicial review
- Added requirements for biometric information (fingerprints and photographs) of temporary residents

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6 [goo.gl/BGfB5B](http://goo.gl/BGfB5B)

### 2012: Changes to the Interim Federal Health Program

- Created different levels of health coverage for different types of refugees and refugee claimants
- Removed all but the most basic coverage from refugee claimants from countries on the DCO list
- Found unconstitutional by the Federal Court of Canada in 2014, for “cruel and unusual treatment” of vulnerable people, and unlawful discrimination on the grounds of national origin

### 2012: Introduction of Conditional Permanent Residence “for sponsored spouses and partners of Canadian citizens and permanent residents who were in a relationship of two years or less and had no children in common, at the time of their sponsorship application.”

- Intended to discourage fraudulent marriages solely for the purposes of immigration, but seriously endangered vulnerable people in abusive relationships. Withdrawn in April of 2017<sup>7</sup>.

### 2013: Faster Removal of Foreign Criminals Act, providing for the deportation of permanent residents convicted of crimes

#### 2014: Changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP)

- Divided the TFWP into two programs, the Temporary Foreign Worker Program led by Employment and Skills Development Canada and requiring a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA); and the International Mobility Program, led by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and not requiring any LMIA
- Made it much easier for businesses to hire workers with temporary status

### 2015

- January 1, 2015: Ending of the Federal Skilled Worker Program; beginning of the Express Entry program to admit potential immigrants who have job offers
- Federal Court of Canada decision ruling that all refugee claimants must have access to the Refugee Appeal Division of the Immigration and

Refugee Board, regardless of national origin. This overturned one of the key provisions of the 2012 Protecting Canada's Immigration System

## 2016 and Onward: Still a Challenging Time

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The federal election in October, 2015, brought in a new government that has reversed some of the policies that were most harmful to vulnerable people, but many serious challenges for immigrants, refugees, and service providers remain.

Here are some of the actions and policy changes since the federal election in October, 2015.

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada was renamed to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- The changes to the Interim Federal Health Program were reversed, and health care was restored to refugee claimants
- Ahmed Hussen, a former refugee and the first Somali-Canadian member of Cabinet, was appointed Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship
- The Canada Revenue Agency's politically-motivated audits of charitable organizations, begun in 2012, were suspended

## A New Phase of Experimentation

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Since 2015, the federal government has identified six priorities for immigration policy:

- Economic growth
- Humanitarianism
- Enhanced integration
- Diversity and attachment
- Client service
- Efficient processing

The government has also stated that it plans to experiment with “new and bold approaches” to immigration and settlement policy and practices, such as social innovation, to “add new value” to IRCC’s “results.” They also plan to “leverage and further develop” data systems to measure the outcomes of these experiments.

## What does this mean for settlement workers?

For settlement workers, this means more emphasis on figuring out ways for settlement services to generate revenue, and on tracking client interactions and outcomes, especially after any changes to how programs are delivered.

### § Section 3

## Provincial Policies & Strategy about Immigration

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Although the government of Ontario does not directly regulate who immigrates here, it has created institutions, policies, and initiatives to influence federal policy, encourage settlement in the province, and support newcomers. Its main priority is to attract immigrants “to help grow our economy” ([Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, 2017](#))<sup>8</sup>.

The federal and provincial governments have made formal agreements about immigration to the province. These lay out the roles and responsibilities of both levels of government for admitting and supporting immigrants and refugees.

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8 [goo.gl/HYDFpf](http://goo.gl/HYDFpf)



# LIPs and RIFs

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The first of the immigration agreements between Canada and Ontario, effective between 2005 and 2010, recognized the role of municipalities in helping newcomers settle and integrate. A lasting result of this was the creation of Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) and Réseaux en immigration francophone (RIFs).

LIPs and RIFs are networks of service providers and other stakeholders. They are generally locally based. Member organizations of LIPs and RIFs come together on advisory councils that discuss sector-wide collaboration and strategic planning. These councils also agree on priorities for communities who are building capacity to welcome newcomers, and support activities that are in line with these goals.

## Wrap-Up

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In this chapter, we have looked at:

- the ways that laws and policies have shaped who is welcome here
- how racial discrimination has affected immigration law and policy

All this is to give you context for your work. The next two chapters discuss the specific programs that Canada uses to admit immigrants and refugees.

## Sources and Further Reading

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### 1869: The First Immigration Act

- [Immigration Act, 1869](#)<sup>9</sup>. Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21.
- [Safe Third Country Agreement](#)<sup>10</sup>, (infographic) Canadian Council for Refugees.

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9 [goo.gl/ZKRAoc](http://goo.gl/ZKRAoc)

10 [goo.gl/3aD3W3](http://goo.gl/3aD3W3)

## Shifting Policies: Economy and Security

- [Stephen Harper's abhorrent record on refugees and immigration](#)<sup>11</sup>, Patti Tamara Lenard.
- [Canada Immigration Detention](#)<sup>12</sup>, Global Detention Project.
- [Canada's immigration history one of discrimination and exclusion](#)<sup>13</sup>, Debra Black, Toronto Star.
- [A hundred years of immigration to Canada 1900-1999](#)<sup>14</sup>, Canadian Council for Refugees.
- [Never Home: Legislating Discrimination in Canadian Immigration](#)<sup>15</sup>, Canadian Council for Refugees.

## Closing the Doors to Vulnerable People

- [Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services and the Role of Nonprofit Service Providers: A Cross-national Perspective on Trends, Issues and Evidence](#)<sup>16</sup>, John Shields, Julie Drolet, and Karla Valenzuela

## A New Phase of Experimentation

- [Departmental Plan 2017 – 2018](#)<sup>17</sup>, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

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12 [goo.gl/ynHkxW](http://goo.gl/ynHkxW)

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14 [goo.gl/hqKzvz](http://goo.gl/hqKzvz)

15 [goo.gl/c89Yfm](http://goo.gl/c89Yfm)

16 [goo.gl/orjRfk](http://goo.gl/orjRfk)

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## CHAPTER 3

# Economic and Family Class Immigration to Ontario



## Learning Outcomes

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Upon completion of Chapter 3, you will be able to:

- Discuss the various IRCC categories and programs for workers, investors, and their family members to enter Canada
- Understand IRCC's definition of "family" and the programs for sponsoring family members through immigration
- Discuss IRCC's programs for bringing temporary foreign workers to Canada
- Provide accurate, up-to-date information and resources on these topics

## § Section 1

# Canada's Permanent Resident Program

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Citizens from other countries can apply for permanent residency under either Economic classes or Non-Economic classes.

## Economic Classes

This includes over a dozen categories including:

- skilled workers and tradespeople
- workers with Canadian experience
- entrepreneurs and self-employed people
- investors

## Non-Economic Classes

This includes categories for:

- family reunification
- adoption
- humanitarian or compassionate consideration
- protected persons

We'll review some of these categories in more detail as well as some of the related issues newcomers may experience.


# Migration for Economic Reasons

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Canada's large land area, natural resources, and relatively sparse population have often meant labour shortages, leading the government to invite workers in from other countries. Many people have accepted the invitation because to them, Canada represents a better standard of living and a better life.

## Economic Immigration a Priority

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**According to the 2016 Census,  
between 2011 & 2016**

**60.3%** of newcomers applied for permanent residency under economic classes. This includes principal applicants as well as their spouses and dependants.

Canada's treatment of economic migrants has shifted over the years, varying with historical events such as war and the Great Depression, racist sentiments, and the needs of the labour market.

In the early 21st century, Canada has prioritized economic immigration over reuniting families and resettling refugees.

## Economic Classes

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As of 2017, the Canadian government's program for permanent residency has over a dozen categories for people submitting applications under economic classes.

IRCC states that applicants in these classes "...are selected on the basis of their ability to become economically established in Canada."

The categories and programs change frequently, depending on how the federal government perceives the country's economic needs. While you do not need to know all the details of each program, it is important for you as a settlement worker to stay aware of any changes.

# Skilled Workers and Provincial Nominees

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The Federal Skilled Worker (FSW) program and the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) are designed to meet the needs of the labour market by attracting immigrants with work experience in certain fields. People who enter Canada under these programs are assessed under a “points” system that awards credit according to:



- ✓ **language ability** in English or French
- ✓ **age**
- ✓ level of **education**
- ✓ **work experience**
- ✓ existing **connections to Canada** such as family members living here or experience with studying or working in the country.

## FSW and OINP Programs

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Those admitted under these programs can bring their immediate families, including spouses and dependent children, as long as the family members are not found medically or criminally inadmissible. Entire families have been refused entry because IRCC decided that one dependent member was likely to place “excessive demand” on Canada’s medical or social services, although the Minister of Immigration has agreed to review this policy.

### FSW program

Anyone applying under the **FSW** program after January 31, 2015, must use the Express Entry system, which ranks applications according to the points system before inviting highly ranked people to apply for permanent residence.

### OINP program

The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (**OINP**) allows a fixed number of people to apply for a certificate of provincial nomination each year. Under this program, employers or investors can recruit people from outside Canada, or temporary foreign workers who are already in the country. The province reviews the potential recruits and decides whether to award a provincial nomination certificate,

which entitles applicants to half the available points through the federal Express Entry system. Settlement.org describes the categories for provincial nominees, and the requirements for each.

## How can you support skilled workers and provincial nominees?

People who enter Canada under these programs are often highly educated and extremely knowledgeable about Canadian immigration and settlement. In some cases, their knowledge may even be more up-to-date than that of the settlement workers who support them. This can be challenging for both sides: the immigrant may not trust the worker, and the worker may feel frustrated and embarrassed about their own level of knowledge. Workers can address this by providing specific information about the community where the immigrant is settling – although they may be very knowledgeable about Canada, they are less likely to be familiar with the details of their new everyday environment. Less experienced settlement workers can also seek guidance from more experienced ones, or refer service seekers to them.

Continuous professional development and staying on top of immigration news are crucial practices for settlement workers.

## Case Study: Chaudry - Skilled Worker Program

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Chaudry is a 35-year-old man who immigrated to Canada from Pakistan under the Skilled Worker Program. He is a trained engineer with over ten years' experience in his profession. To meet Professional Engineers Ontario's requirement that he work for one year in Canada under the supervision of a licensed engineer, he has sent out over 200 resumes, but he has received no response to them. Following the advice given at a job search workshop, he has contacted several engineers in his specialization to ask for information interviews. All have told him that their firms do not hire unlicensed engineers with no Canadian experience. His family's savings are dwindling and he is considering taking a low-skilled job on a construction site to meet expenses.



## Reflection: Chaudry

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How can you support Chaudry and his family?

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## Skilled Tradespeople

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The **Federal Skilled Trades Program (FSTP)** is for potential immigrants who have:

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- ✓ **2+ years' experience** in a skilled trade such as carpentry, equipment operation, or cooking
- ✓ **intermediate fluency** in English or French
- ✓ an offer of a **full-time job** or a **certificate of qualification** in their trade issued by a provincial authority
- ✓ People who want to enter under the FSTP must apply through the **Express Entry system**.



## How can you support skilled tradespeople?

Here are five strategies to support skilled tradespeople.

- Offer settlement support such as training or bridging programs to become familiar with Canadian building codes, or to learn supplemental trades outside their immediate field of expertise.
- Provide help navigating government systems if they are laid off, or if they are injured at work. Workplace injuries can be common for newcomers who are not made aware of safety regulations and procedures, and who are so eager to work and begin earning income that they do not feel they can take the time to learn about these things themselves.
- Refer people to local providers of employment services that offer accurate information about workplace safety and legal protections. You can also use the Prevention is the Best Medicine toolkit from Institute for Work and Health to deliver workshops on this topic. You can connect them with the Job Search Workshop program, where participants receive packages of information and training about the Canadian labour market.
- Offer workers who can speak their language.
- Provide typical settlement services such as housing help, language training, and others as appropriate.

## Immigrant Investors

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The Immigrant Investor Program was a program that enabled wealthy business people to invest \$800,000 in the Canadian economy for five years in exchange for permanent residency. It was terminated in 2014. A similar pilot program was implemented in 2015, but only seven people applied for 60 spots.

The program may be reopened at some point in the future, but for now, you are likely to see only a few people from this class, mostly spouses and dependent children, seeking settlement services. Some principal applicants may look for investment advice and information about free programs and services.

# Non-Economic Classes: Family Reunification

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Family reunification is Canada's second priority for immigration policy, with economic migration as the first priority and refugees as the third. Canada's definition of "family" is narrower than that in many other parts of the world, making it difficult for extended families to live together permanently here.

Canadian citizens and permanent residents may be eligible to sponsor certain family members through the immigration process.

Eligibility depends on:



- **health and lack of criminal history** of the sponsored person
- the sponsor being **over 18** and **residing in Canada**

For some sponsorships, eligibility depends on the **financial resources** of the sponsor (an annual income over the specified Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO),<sup>1</sup> a number that the government sets each year). There is no LICO in effect for sponsors of spouses, partners, or dependent children.

## What should you know about sponsors and sponsored persons?

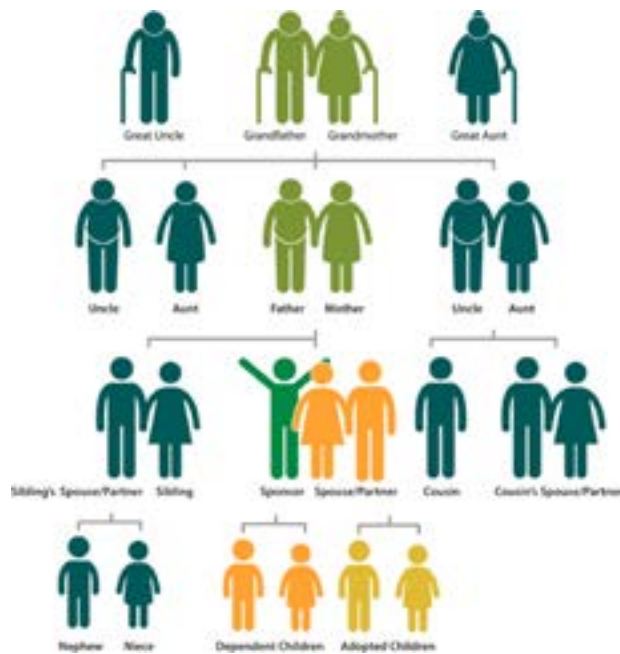
Sponsorship involves a legal agreement that the sponsor will meet all the financial needs and basic requirements of the sponsored person or persons for a specified number of years after they arrive in Canada. Basic requirements include food, clothing, shelter, utilities, fuel, household supplies, and medical and dental care not covered under OHIP.

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1 [goo.gl/mcVspu](http://goo.gl/mcVspu)

Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO)<sup>2</sup> provides information about sponsorship discussing eligibility and responsibilities for sponsors and sponsored people. It is strongly recommended that people with questions about family sponsorship seek legal advice from a professional at a legal clinic or law office.

# Family Class Categories



There are four main categories for family class sponsorships.

1. Spouse, partner, or dependent children
2. Parents and grandparents
3. Other relatives in special circumstances
4. Adopted children

## Spouses, Partners, and Dependent Children

A citizen or permanent resident can sponsor a spouse, common-law or conjugal partner, or dependent children under 22 who are not married or in common-law relationships themselves.

<sup>2</sup> [goo.gl/669Gwq](http://goo.gl/669Gwq)

## Eligibility

These family members can be sponsored to come to Canada, or to remain here if they already live in the country legally with temporary status. Some children who are 22 or older may be eligible for parental sponsorship if they have been financially dependent on their parents already, and a mental or physical condition prevents them from supporting themselves. A sponsor must meet a spouse's financial needs for three years, and a child's financial needs for three to ten years, depending on the child's age at arrival.

## Complicating factors

It is important to note that Section 117(9)(d) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act makes a permanent resident's spouse or dependent children permanently ineligible for sponsorship under the Family Class if the sponsor did not declare them on their initial application for permanent status.

An initial application may not include some family members because the applicant got married or became a parent after applying, because the person did not know about the existence of a child, or because they received bad advice. The Canadian Council for Refugees and other groups have raised serious concerns about this regulation, but as of late 2017 it is still in place.

## Concerns about fraud

People who sponsor spouses or common-law or conjugal partners must demonstrate evidence that the marriage or relationship is genuine, not fraudulent for the purposes of immigration.

In 2012, the federal government deemed "marriage fraud" a priority for enforcement efforts and instituted "conditional permanent residence" for sponsored spouses who had been in Canada for less than two years and did not have children with their sponsor. In some cases, conditional permanent residence trapped people in abusive relationships because they were fearful of deportation.

## Changing government, changing policy

Advocacy from a number of groups and sectors as well as a change in government in 2015 led to the elimination of conditional permanent residence in April of 2017, helping to ensure that fleeing domestic violence does not endanger a sponsored person's status in Canada.

The age of eligibility for dependent children was also lowered to under 19 in 2014, but restored to under 22 in 2017.

Visit the IRCC website to find out more about sponsoring [a spouse, partner, or dependent children](#).<sup>3</sup>

## Parents and Grandparents

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Citizens and permanent residents over 18 can apply to sponsor their parents and grandparents.

### Eligibility

The process to sponsor parents and grandparents can be difficult, unpredictable, and time-consuming. This may be because of attitudes toward older adults.

The cap on the number of successful applications is low, even though demand is very high.

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3 [goo.gl/LkU3dQ](http://goo.gl/LkU3dQ)

**The purely economic perspective:  
older people are liabilities**

Older people are less likely to:

- get jobs
- pay taxes
- contribute to the economy

Older people are more likely to:

- use expensive public services such as the health care system

**A more complete picture: older people  
can be social and economic assets**

Grandparents play a valuable role in family life by:

- providing childcare for working parents
- teaching children about their heritage language and culture of origin, giving them a stronger sense of identity
- providing financial support when they can

## A slow process

Various governments have tried to handle sponsorship of parents and grandparents in different ways. By 2011, there was a massive backlog of 165,000 parents and grandparents of Canadian citizens and permanent residents waiting an average of six years to hear if they had been admitted to Canada.

Jason Kenney, the Minister of Immigration at the time, addressed this backlog in several ways:

- Placing a moratorium on new applications as of 2011
- Introducing the Super Visa program, creating new ten-year visas permitting multiple entries to Canada for parents and grandparents of citizens and permanent residents, and allowing them to visit for up to two years at a time
- Implementing stricter requirements about financial resources of sponsors
- Extending the sponsorship period, the time when sponsors are responsible for meeting the needs of sponsored people, for parents and grandparents from ten years to twenty years
- Placing an annual cap on the number of people who can sponsor parents and grandparents

Kenney's department reopened the family sponsorship program in 2014, with a limit of 5,000 applications. Since then, the limit has been increased to 10,000, and will be raised again to 20,000 in 2019.

## Changing processes

In early 2017, the new government changed the first-come-first-served approach to a lottery system. 95,000 families entered the lottery during the one month that it was open, with 10,000 chosen at random to submit applications. However, by mid-2017, only 700 of those 10,000 people had actually applied. Many did not realize when they filled out the forms for the lottery that they were not eligible to sponsor their parents or grandparents, because they did not have a high enough annual income for the previous three years.

Public outcry about the lottery system has resulted in a 2019 return to the first-come, first-served approach.

## Serious issues

As it stands, Canada's system for reuniting citizens and permanent residents with their parents and grandparents presents some serious issues.

- It keeps the majority of immigrant families who want to reunite permanently from doing so, and leaves them unable to make long-term plans about eldercare.
- It does not recognize the valuable contributions that older family members can make to social cohesion and people's well-being.
- It keeps parents and grandparents on Super Visas from working, studying, or using publicly funded services such as health care, English classes, and other settlement services that help with long-term integration.
- It means that parents and grandparents staying in Canada on Super Visas must pay for private medical insurance.
- It favours wealthier families. Given the strong correlation between racialization and lower incomes, this means that in many cases, non-white families are less likely to be able to reunite permanently under Canada's system.

Visit the IRCC website to find out more about [sponsoring parents and grandparents](#)<sup>4</sup>.

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4 [goo.gl/AA2Cgo](https://goo.gl/AA2Cgo)

# Other Relatives

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In most cases, Canada does not consider siblings or extended family such as aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews to be eligible for sponsorship under the Family Class. There are two exceptions:

- An orphaned sibling, niece or nephew, or grandchild
- under 18 without a spouse, common-law partner, or conjugal partner
- Any relative connected by blood or adoption if no other family members are admissible under the Family Class or are already present in Canada as citizens or permanent residents

Immigrants and refugees who wish to sponsor such family members should be referred to a lawyer or legal clinic for advice.

Visit the IRCC website to find out more about sponsoring [other relatives](#)<sup>5</sup> in special circumstances.

# Adopted Children

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Canadian citizens and permanent residents who wish to adopt children born in other countries must follow specific steps. They must work with an international adoption agency licensed in Ontario, go through a home study and a mandatory training program, and visit the child in their first country at least once. After the adoption is finalized, the family can apply to sponsor the child for permanent resident status. The child cannot enter Canada until permanent status has been secured. Once the child is a permanent resident, the family can apply for citizenship immediately.

Visit the IRCC website to find out more about sponsoring [adopted children](#)<sup>6</sup>.

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5 [goo.gl/avzUgL](http://goo.gl/avzUgL)

6 [goo.gl/o62B18](http://goo.gl/o62B18)



# Canada's Temporary Resident Programs

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Many Canadian businesses, especially farms, have come to depend on migrant labourers who come to Canada on temporary work permits. IRCC has two programs that enable temporary foreign workers to enter the country:

- [The Temporary Foreign Worker Program \(TFWP\)](#)<sup>7</sup>
- [The International Mobility Program \(IMP\)](#)<sup>8</sup>

## Temporary Foreign Workers

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To bring in temporary foreign workers under the TFWP, a Canadian employer must file a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA). This is a document that establishes that labour is needed but no Canadians or permanent residents are available to do it. LMIAs are not required for the International Mobility Program. Canadian employers are also legally responsible for paying the costs of bringing temporary workers to Canada.

IRCC also offers the [Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program \(SAWP\)](#)<sup>9</sup>, started in 1966, under the TFWP. Under the SAWP, employers can hire workers from Mexico and certain Caribbean countries to do farm work for up to eight months of a calendar year.

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7 [goo.gl/frsDmf](http://goo.gl/frsDmf)

8 [goo.gl/3n6MmR](http://goo.gl/3n6MmR)

9 [goo.gl/s7uQ8j](http://goo.gl/s7uQ8j)

## Eligibility

In most cases, temporary foreign workers who have entered Canada under the TFWP may not change employers without a new LMIA and work permit listing the new employer. However, participants in the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program are free to change jobs at any time during the duration of their permits. They can be asked to work for a different farm, but only with their consent.

Some temporary foreign workers are eligible to apply for permanent residency under the Canadian Experience Class, which gives credit for work experience in Canada in certain skilled jobs listed in the Canadian National Occupation Classification. However, migrant workers in unskilled jobs such as food service and farm work cannot apply for permanent status under this class.

# Health Care for Temporary Foreign Workers

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Many temporary foreign workers have returned to Canada every year for decades. Because they do not have permanent status, they are not eligible for most employer-provided benefits or publicly funded services. These include extended healthcare plans with vision and dental care, pension plans, and most programs and services at immigrant and refugee-serving agencies. They must also wait three months<sup>10</sup> after arrival in Canada to be eligible for OHIP coverage.

Temporary foreign workers are vulnerable to predatory Canadian recruiters who ask prospective migrants for thousands of dollars to connect them with jobs and handle documentation for work permits. They are also vulnerable to employers who mistreat workers and threaten them with firing and deportation if they complain. It has long been known that linking work permits to specific employers can open workers to exploitation.

## How can you support temporary foreign workers?

The immigrant and refugee-supporting sector can work to assist this population in several ways:

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10 [goo.gl/jBnLdW](https://goo.gl/jBnLdW)

- Connecting people waiting for OHIP coverage to Community Health Centres
- Seeking alternative funding to provide programs and services such as legal help
- Raising awareness of the issues that migrant workers face
- Advocating for open work permits on arrival, and easier paths to permanent status

## Case Study: Lailani - Caregiver Program

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Lailani is a 26-year-old woman from the Philippines who entered Canada in early 2014 under the Live-In Caregiver Program. Educated as a nurse but unable to find a salaried job in her country, Lailani left her two daughters, ages four and six, with her parents so that she could find work in Canada. She lives with a Canadian family and cares for their disabled and chronically ill son. The son's illness has caused a great deal of stress for the family and Lailani's working conditions are often difficult. The family frequently demands that she perform duties not related to caregiving, such as yard work, and that she works longer hours than agreed. They have threatened her with deportation

if she refuses. She communicates with her family through Skype regularly, but her daughters have recently decided they do not want to talk to her. She wants to apply for permanent residence and would like to get some help with the application, but she cannot get enough time off work to visit your agency during its opening hours. She has phoned your office for support.

## Reflection: Lailani

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How can you support Lailani?

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## Regulations for Caregivers

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There are special regulations about work permits for temporary foreign workers employed to care for children, seniors, or people with disabilities or high medical needs. Temporary workers who applied to work as live-in caregivers and whose LMIA's were submitted to Employment and Skills Development Canada before November 30, 2014, are covered by the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP) and received special LCP work permits rather than regular TFW permits.

The Live-In Caregiver program required workers to live with and work for a single employer for the duration of their work permit, often leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and poor working conditions such as unpaid overtime and expectations of work well outside caregiving responsibilities. The changes implemented in 2014 mean that caregivers are no longer required to live with their employers. However, many still do, as separate housing can be prohibitively expensive.

# Complicating Factors for Caregivers

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New applications are not being accepted under the Live-In Caregiver Program. Instead, Canadians and permanent residents who wish to hire foreign workers as caregivers must go through the regular Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

Temporary foreign workers who have entered Canada under the [Live-In Caregiver Program](#),<sup>11</sup> the [Caring for Children Program](#),<sup>12</sup> or the [Caring for People with High Medical Needs Program](#)<sup>13</sup> may be eligible to apply for permanent residence after two years of working as caregivers in Canada.

## Issues in applying for permanent residency for caregivers

By late 2017, there was a backlog of at least 27,000 applications for permanent residence from participants in the Live-In Caregiver Program. The average wait for people caught in this backlog was 53 months, with some reporting that they had been waiting for over a decade. Applicants for permanent residence cannot begin the process to sponsor family members until their own applications are approved. This means that many caregivers working in Canada have been separated from their own families for many years. Advocacy groups have been working to bring attention to the issues that caregivers face, to prompt IRCC to address the backlog, and to secure permanent residence for caregivers on arrival.

## Supporting Caregivers

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Settlement workers can support caregivers in several ways:

- Staying up-to-date on regulations affecting caregivers
- Letting them know about their legal rights, and referring them to legal clinics when necessary

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11 [goo.gl/df98tf](http://goo.gl/df98tf)

12 [goo.gl/H2pfgw](http://goo.gl/H2pfgw)

13 [goo.gl/4Rm13t](http://goo.gl/4Rm13t)

- Connecting them with the Caregivers Action Centre
- Advocating for fair treatment

## Wrap-Up

This chapter has looked at how the Canadian government prioritizes immigration for economic reasons, and at the various programs that allow economic class immigrants and temporary workers into Canada. It has also discussed the programs for sponsoring family members through immigration, and considered how IRCC's definition of "family" affects these programs. Finally, it has described IRCC's programs to bring in temporary foreign workers to meet the labour market's increasing demand, and looked at ways to support people with temporary status. The next chapter is about refugees, refugee claimants, and people without status.

## Sources and Further Reading

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### Economic Classes

- [Government of Canada Permanent Resident Program: Economic Classes](#)<sup>14</sup>, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

### Skilled Workers and Provincial Nominees

- [How can I come to Canada as a skilled worker?](#)<sup>15</sup>, Settlement.org
- [What is the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program?](#)<sup>16</sup>, Settlement.org

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14 [goo.gl/c5my9H](http://goo.gl/c5my9H)

15 [goo.gl/TiL63b](http://goo.gl/TiL63b)

16 [goo.gl/dmNxmV](http://goo.gl/dmNxmV)

## Skilled Tradespeople

- [How can I come to Canada as a skilled trades worker?](#)<sup>17</sup>, Settlement.org
- [Workplace Safety and Insurance Board](#)<sup>18</sup>, WSIB Ontario.
- [Job Search Workshops for Newcomers to Ontario](#)<sup>19</sup>, jswontario.org

## Family Reunification

- [Canadian Council for Refugees Submission on 117\(9\)\(d\)](#)<sup>20</sup>, ccrweb.ca

## Parents and Grandparents

- [Federal immigration lottery backfires. Thousands of families left behind](#)<sup>21</sup>, The National Observer
- [Temporary Families? The Parent and Grandparent Sponsorship Program and the Neoliberal Regime of Immigration Governance in Canada](#)<sup>22</sup>, Xiaobei Chen and Sherry Xiaohan Thorpe.

## Other Relatives

- [Immigration Manuals, Operational Processing, Chapter 2: Processing Members of the Family Class](#)<sup>23</sup>

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17 [goo.gl/uFFGKP](http://goo.gl/uFFGKP)

18 [goo.gl/Je73VS](http://goo.gl/Je73VS)

19 [goo.gl/w8iFnv](http://goo.gl/w8iFnv)

20 [goo.gl/ap61yd](http://goo.gl/ap61yd)

21 [goo.gl/1mmCW6](http://goo.gl/1mmCW6)

22 [goo.gl/2dZbdk](http://goo.gl/2dZbdk)

23 [goo.gl/EVgsRk](http://goo.gl/EVgsRk)

## Adopted Children

- [Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services: International Adoption<sup>24</sup>](#), children.gov.on.ca
- [Adopt a Child from Abroad<sup>25</sup>](#), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

## A Vulnerable Group

- [Unscrupulous recruiters keep migrant workers in “debt bondage<sup>26</sup>,”](#) The Toronto Star.
- [He’s worked legally in Canada for 37 years but the government considers him “temporary<sup>27</sup>,”](#) The Toronto Star.

## Regulations for Caregivers

- [Immigration backlog keeps live-in caregivers from their families back home<sup>28</sup>,](#) The Toronto Star.

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24 [goo.gl/neMkGB](http://goo.gl/neMkGB)

25 [goo.gl/PrcWQm](http://goo.gl/PrcWQm)

26 [goo.gl/s91vfi](http://goo.gl/s91vfi)

27 [goo.gl/tBen5n](http://goo.gl/tBen5n)

28 [goo.gl/XFjNQi](http://goo.gl/XFjNQi)



## CHAPTER 4

# Refugees, Refugee Claimants, and People without Immigration Status in Ontario



## Learning Outcomes

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Upon completion of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Discuss the Canadian refugee protection programs: resettlement to Canada and the in-Canada asylum program
- Understand how people in Canada can end up without immigration status
- Find and provide accurate, up-to-date information and resources on these topics

## § Section 1

# What Is a Refugee?

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A refugee is a person who has been forced to flee their home country because it is no longer safe for them to live there. There are many reasons why people become refugees. Some are fleeing large-scale crises such as war, natural disaster, famine, or the effects of climate change. Others are running from persecution for reasons of religion, ethnicity, political beliefs, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

The word “refugee” is commonly used to refer to a person who has had to flee their country of origin who may not have legal status anywhere else, or may have official recognition as a Convention Refugee by the UNHCR or another country’s government. The Canadian Council for Refugees provides a [glossary](#)<sup>1</sup> of various terms used to describe refugees.

## A Legal Definition of Refugee

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In the aftermath of World War II, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in 1951, and amended it to protect people outside Europe in 1967. This document, signed by 145 member nations, establishes a universal legal definition for the term “refugee,” and commits signatory States to protect them.

The legal definition for “refugee” is as follows:



*Owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.*

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1 [goo.gl/hHzo5z](http://goo.gl/hHzo5z)

People who fit this definition are recognized as Convention refugees. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is responsible for protecting refugees who do not have the protection of a State.

## Durable Solutions for Refugees

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UNHCR works to protect and assist refugees, but the ultimate goal is to find solutions that allow them to rebuild their lives in dignity and peace. There are three durable solutions for refugees: voluntary return to their own country of origin, local integration in their country of asylum, or resettlement to a third country for those who are not able to return home or remain safely in their asylum country. Very few refugees have been able to find a durable solution in recent decades. Longstanding conflicts remain unresolved making it impossible for refugees to return home, and new crises are erupting around the world. Resettlement receives considerable global attention, but less than one per cent of the world's refugees are resettled in any year.

## Statistics on Refugees Worldwide

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In 2017, the UNHCR reported that there were 22.5 million refugees among the record number of 65.6 million forcibly displaced people worldwide. Those who flee to other parts of their own countries are internally displaced persons (IDPs) and are not counted as refugees.

### Resettlement

Resettlement is the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another State that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent settlement. Resettlement is unique in that it is the only durable solution that involves the relocation of refugees from an asylum country to a third country.

Very few countries participate in the resettlement programs. In recent years the United States has been the world's top resettlement country, with Canada, Australia and the Nordic countries also providing a sizeable number of places annually.

Canada is one of UNHCR's leading resettlement partners, welcoming thousands of refugees each year. More information is available on the [UNHCR website](#).<sup>2</sup>

A record number of 189,300 refugees were permanently resettled under the UNHCR's program in 2016, but only 65,101 refugees were resettled in 2017. As well as committing to resettling thousands of UNHCR-referred refugees each year, Canada's unique Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program also allows private sponsoring groups to offer refugees in need the opportunity to be resettled. Canada admitted 46,700 refugees in 2016, and 26,975 in 2017, some through UNHCR and the rest through private sponsorship groups.

## § Section 2

# Refugees to Canada: Sometimes Welcome, Sometimes Not

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Earlier chapters in this guide have covered how Canadian law and immigration policy have governed the entrance of refugees into the country. To recap briefly, Canada's history of openness to refugees has been mixed.

## Canada's history of openness to refugees

Canada has been a place of refuge for persecuted people since the late 1700s, when Quakers and Black Loyalists fled the American Revolution. The federal government promotes an online exposition called [Canada: A History of Refuge](#),<sup>3</sup> highlighting times when the country has welcomed

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<sup>2</sup> [goo.gl/TyEzhU](http://goo.gl/TyEzhU)

<sup>3</sup> [goo.gl/E6KXU2](http://goo.gl/E6KXU2)

people fleeing persecution, disaster, and conflict. The most recent example is the resettlement across Canada of more than 46,000 Syrians escaping that country's civil war. Canada has been recognized for its contributions to international humanitarian and refugee aid programs. In particular, the people of Canada were awarded in 1986 with the UNHCR's Nansen Refugee Award in recognition of their outstanding refugee resettlement efforts through private refugee sponsorship.

Canada has also turned away desperate people, at times sending them to their deaths, such as when immigration officials refused entry to more than 900 Jewish refugees fleeing Germany during World War II.

The Canadian government made some significant changes to the asylum program in 2012<sup>4</sup>. Some of these changes made it harder for

people from certain countries to get refugee status here. However, the government did create the new Refugee Appeal Division to establish an appeals process for people whose claims have been rejected. It also changed the system so that decisions about refugee claims are made by public servants, not political appointees.

## Canada's Refugee System

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Canada admits refugees under two separate programs.

The **Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program** offers protection for a limited number of recognized refugees outside Canada who are not able to return home or stay safely in their country of asylum. They cannot apply directly to the Canadian government for status here. They must be referred to Canada by the UNHCR, another referral organization, or a private sponsoring group in Canada. Canadian officials interview refugees who have been referred, and make the final decision on whether to admit them to Canada. The government of Canada plans to increase the numbers of refugees resettled from 27,000 in 2018, to 31,700 in 2020.<sup>5</sup> The majority will be privately sponsored.

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4 [goo.gl/V8RLC9](http://goo.gl/V8RLC9)

5 [goo.gl/1g157j](http://goo.gl/1g157j)

The **In-Canada Asylum Program** enables individuals who have already entered Canada to seek refugee protection. To be accepted they must be found to have a “well-founded fear” of persecution based on Convention Refugee grounds (race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion) or to otherwise be persons in need of protection because their lives would be at risk or there is a risk of cruel and unusual treatment, punishment, or torture if they return to their home country. People who apply for status under this program are considered refugee claimants until their applications are approved and their status is determined at a hearing by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB).

# The Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program

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## Convention Refugees and Humanitarian-Protected Persons

Refugees may be accepted for resettlement from outside Canada if they meet the criteria for either the Convention Refugee Class or the Country of Asylum Class. To be admitted as **Convention refugees** they must demonstrate that they cannot return to their countries of origin for fear of individual persecution on specific grounds.

To be admitted under the **Country of Asylum class**, refugees must have a private sponsorship. They do not need to face individual persecution, but must demonstrate that they cannot go home because they are seriously and personally affected by civil war or armed conflict or face ongoing violations of their basic human rights.

Many people admitted to Canada under the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program have already spent years or decades as refugees living in unstable circumstances or in refugee camps. Refugees who are approved for resettlement before they enter Canada receive permanent status when they arrive.

# Three Paths to Canada

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There are three streams for admitting Convention refugees or people in the Country of Asylum class to Canada.

- Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR) program
- Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program
- Blended Visa Office-Referral (BVOR) program

## Government-Assisted Refugees

Government-assisted refugees (GARs) are referred to the Canadian government by UNHCR. The federal government routes them to selected Canadian cities, and supports them through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). The agency designated as the RAP service-providing organization (RAP SPO) is responsible for providing reception and orientation during the first 6-8 weeks after arrival. This includes finding housing, connecting people with healthcare providers and educational programs, and teaching them about the local community. RAP also provides income support to cover initial costs to set up a home, and basic monthly living costs for up to 12 months, or until the refugee is self-supporting. The government plans to increase the number of GARs to be admitted to Canada from 7500 in 2018 to 10,000 in 2020. About 1/3 of these will be settled in Ontario.

GARs with special needs may also be matched to a private sponsoring group under the Joint Assistance Sponsorship Program (JAS). Refugees under the JAS program receive RAP for up to 24 months.

## Privately Sponsored Refugees

Canada is unique in the world in that its citizens and permanent residents can supplement the number of refugees resettled by the government through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program. Using their own resources, Canadians can offer eligible refugees the opportunity to rebuild their lives. Sponsoring groups commit to providing financial and settlement-related responsibilities for the duration of the sponsorship, which is typically one year after refugees arrive in Canada. Groups can be organized in three different ways.



**Sponsorship Agreement Holders** are incorporated organizations that have signed agreements with IRCC which allow them to regularly resettle refugees from abroad. A SAH can authorize a **constituent group** to sponsor people under its Sponsorship Agreement. SAHs are mostly religious, community, or ethnocultural organizations that have demonstrated their organizational and financial capacity to manage sponsorship responsibilities. SAHs and their constituent groups may sponsor people with their own resources, or collaborate with others in the community. Many SAHs and constituent groups have sponsored regularly over the years, and have a wealth of institutional knowledge pertaining to refugee settlement. Only SAHs and their constituent groups are eligible to be matched to JAS cases.

Groups of Five are composed of five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents who have come together to sponsor a refugee to settle in their local community. Many Groups of Five come together specifically to sponsor a refugee related to one of the group members, and may need more support in navigating the system. Some Groups of Five sponsor people regularly.

**Community Sponsors** are organizations, associations, or corporations who take on refugee sponsorship but do not have a signed agreement with the Canadian government. Community Sponsors may only commit to sponsoring people once, and may need more support in navigating the system. Others sponsor people regularly.

### **Selecting Privately Sponsored Refugees**

Private groups select whom they wish to sponsor. Usually this is someone who has connections to people associated with the sponsoring group or referred to them by an overseas partner. Unless the group is a registered Sponsorship Agreement Holder, sponsored refugees must already have official refugee status, granted by UNHCR or the authorities of the state where they are residing.

There is currently a large backlog of sponsorship applications and overseas processing may take many years. To reduce the backlog, IRCC limits the number of refugees SAHs can sponsor under their agreements, and has planned to increase the number of privately sponsored refugees that will be admitted from 18,000 in 2018 to 20,000 in 2020.

Private sponsors without direct connections to refugees can be matched with a refugee referred by UNHCR and already accepted for resettlement to Canada. IRCC maintains a nationwide list of such refugees, and works to match them with private sponsors. Some are sponsored through the Blended Visa Office-Referral program, described in the next section.



## Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program

As its name suggests, the Blended Visa Office-Referred program combines the resources of the federal government and private sponsors to support Convention refugees identified by UNHCR. The federal government provides income support for six months under the RAP, and a private sponsorship group provides start-up costs and income support for the other six months. The sponsorship group is also responsible for providing settlement support and addressing the sponsored refugees' social and emotional needs for the entire sponsorship period, which can be up to twelve months.

Sponsorship Agreement Holders, Constituent Groups, Groups of Five, and Community Sponsors are all eligible to participate in the BVOR program.

### **Why do people choose to participate in this program?**

Many choose to participate in this program for several reasons:

- Faster processing times: refugees have already been referred by UNHCR and approved as meeting the Canadian government's criteria for resettlement
- Lower costs to the sponsoring group
- Less paperwork

Refugees selected for the BVOR program generally have lower settlement and health needs than GARs. IRCC provides guidelines for sponsoring groups about BVOR matching, which is facilitated by the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program.

## Privately Sponsored Refugees: Special Considerations

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### The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program

Sponsoring groups vary in terms of their composition as well as experience. Even experienced groups may still need support when situations arise that they have not encountered before. All sponsoring groups also need to stay up-to-date with changes to the sponsorship program.

The [Refugee Sponsorship Training Program](#)<sup>6</sup> has been created to support private sponsors, and to inform them and the people they sponsor of program requirements and the rights and responsibilities for everyone involved in sponsorship arrangements.

This program also offers an [information sheet for settlement workers about private sponsorship of refugees](#)<sup>7</sup>. It is important to review this sheet if you are working with sponsorship groups and privately sponsored refugees.

### **Key Points from the RSTP**

Here are some of the key points from the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program information sheet.

- You (the settlement worker) and the sponsoring group should meet before the refugees arrive to review the settlement plan and discuss available services.
- Privately sponsored refugees are eligible for the same services as any other newcomer. You should still conduct a needs assessment to identify appropriate services or programs.
- You may be called on to manage expectations and encourage dialogue between refugees and their sponsors.
- If you suspect that the refugees are not getting enough support from their sponsors, you can follow the steps listed in the document from the RSTP.
- You should understand the sponsorship group's level of experience, so that you will know how much support they are likely to need.

All privately sponsored refugees are Permanent Residents upon arrival in Canada, and are entitled to the same services and programs as other newcomers. Service providers play a complementary role to that of the sponsors who have signed a legal undertaking to provide financial, logistical and social support.

## Sponsorship Disputes, Breakdowns, and Defaults

Sometimes sponsorship disputes, breakdowns, or defaults occur because newcomers or their sponsors have unrealistic expectations. Again, the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program

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6 [goo.gl/ZgmKJ7](http://goo.gl/ZgmKJ7)

7 [goo.gl/hmdGao](http://goo.gl/hmdGao)

provides [resources and support](#)<sup>8</sup> to help settlement workers, sponsors, and refugees understand how to avoid such situations, and how to [manage the expectations](#)<sup>9</sup> of everyone involved.

**Sponsorship disputes:** For many reasons, sponsors and refugees may have disagreements or misunderstandings during the sponsorship period. There may be language barriers, unrealistic expectations, or differences of opinion. You as a settlement worker may be able to help resolve such disputes by helping sponsors and refugees communicate with each other, by referring them to mediators, or by connecting them to a local IRCC office, which is responsible for managing issues that come up after arrival.

**Sponsorship breakdowns:** In some rare cases, a dispute becomes so serious that it cannot be resolved, becoming an “irreparable failure” in the relationship between the sponsor and the refugees. Sponsorship breakdowns can also occur because the sponsoring group is no longer able to provide the agreed level of support, or because the sponsored people decide to move to a new area inside Canada. If IRCC determines that the sponsored people caused the breakdown, they may not receive any more help from the sponsor or IRCC.

**Sponsorship defaults:** IRCC declares a sponsorship default when they find that a sponsoring group is responsible for the breakdown and has not tried to resolve it. A sponsorship group in default will not be allowed to sponsor anyone else until the default ends. This happens when the sponsoring group repays the government any support money that the newcomer received.

## Non-Accompanying Family Members: The One-Year Window of Opportunity

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Family members of convention refugees and humanitarian-protected persons who do not enter Canada with the principal applicant have one year from the date of the principal applicant’s arrival to submit an application for permanent residence for themselves.

To be eligible for this type of application, family members must:

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8 [goo.gl/wZTFxK](http://goo.gl/wZTFxK)

9 [goo.gl/2vwW8R](http://goo.gl/2vwW8R)

- Be a spouse, common-law partner, dependent child, or dependent child of a dependent child of the principal applicant, who entered Canada as a Convention refugee or humanitarian-protected person
- Be declared on the principal applicant's initial application
- Submit their applications no more than one year after the principal applicant arrived

Family members who apply within this one-year window will be considered as part of the initial application. If they miss the window, they might be eligible for status in Canada under other immigration programs such as family-class sponsorship.

## The In-Canada Asylum Program

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The In-Canada Asylum program is for people who have already arrived in Canada and want to stay because they are fearful of going home. Some have been living in Canada on student or visitor visas, or as temporary foreign workers, and apply for refugee status from inside the country (an “inland” application). Others claim asylum at a port of entry, such as an airport or border crossing, when they are coming into Canada. People who have been convicted of serious criminal offenses or who have previously been denied refugee status in Canada are not eligible for this program.

Claimants who apply at a port of entry are given an application package and 15 days to complete and submit all the forms. The most important of these is the Basis of Claim (BOC) form, which explains why the applicant should be considered a Convention refugee or a person in need of protection. Those who apply inland at an IRCC office must have already completed the relevant forms.

### Eligibility for a Hearing

After a person makes a refugee claim at the border or inland, their eligibility for a hearing is assessed. People are not eligible if they are entering Canada by way of a “[safe third country](#)”<sup>10</sup> (including the United States), have already received refugee status elsewhere, have already made an unsuccessful claim in Canada, or are suspected or convicted of terrorism, espionage, or a crime considered serious in Canada.

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10 [goo.gl/MexSGP](http://goo.gl/MexSGP)

Most claimants who are found eligible then wait for a hearing at the Refugee Protection Division (RPD) of the Immigration and Review Board (IRB). In some cases, the reasons for the claim are so clear and well-documented that the IRB decides the hearing is not necessary, and immediately grants the claimant status as a refugee in Canada.

The Canadian Council for Refugees provides a [Hearing Preparation Kit](#)<sup>11</sup> to help refugee claimants get their documentation in order and get ready for the hearing. IRCC also offers a [Claimant's Guide](#)<sup>12</sup> to let people know what to expect.

## The Hearing and Successful Claims

At the hearing, the claimant and any witnesses will testify, and the claimant or the claimant's counsel will be asked to explain why the

evidence shows that the refugee claim is valid. The RPD member will then accept or reject the claim. For a claim to be approved, the claimant must be able to prove a "well-founded fear of persecution" or a risk of death, torture, or cruel or unusual punishment in their home countries.

A successful claim does not give permanent status automatically, but a successful claimant can apply for it immediately, unless they are a Designated Foreign National, a classification discussed a bit later in this chapter. Designated Foreign Nationals must wait five years before applying.

As well as applying for permanent status, successful claimants can start the process to bring immediate family to Canada, and they can also apply for OHIP coverage.

## Withdrawn and Abandoned Claims

Depending on when the claim is withdrawn, the consequences will be different.

- If a claimant withdraws the claim **before being referred to the Refugee Protection Division:**
- Future claims can still be found eligible
- Any existing temporary status (visitor, student, temporary foreign worker) is still valid until its expiry date

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11 [goo.gl/pTbKpg](http://goo.gl/pTbKpg)

12 [goo.gl/yZjBKY](http://goo.gl/yZjBKY)

- If they withdraw the claim **after it is found ineligible**, any future claims are ineligible as well, and a removal order may be issued. There are different types of removal orders, discussed later in this chapter.
- If they withdraw the claim **after being referred to the Refugee Protection Division**, they are ineligible to make any future refugee claim, and they must leave the country within 15 days to avoid being issued a Deportation Order.
- A claimant who withdraws a refugee claim **before any evidence is presented** at their immigration hearing can then apply to stay in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.
- The **RPD may consider a claim to be abandoned** if a claimant does not submit forms on time, does not provide correct contact information, or does not show up at a hearing. An abandoned claim means that the person cannot apply for refugee status again in the future, and is likely to be removed from Canada.

## What Happens if a Refugee Claim is Unsuccessful

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A person whose refugee claim is denied has three options: leave Canada voluntarily, appeal the denial, or remain in Canada without status.

### Leaving Canada voluntarily

When a person claims refugee status at a port of entry or an IRCC office, they are given a conditional Removal Order that goes into effect if their claim is denied. If they choose not to appeal the denial, or if all attempts to appeal have failed, the person must leave Canada within 30 days. They must register their departure with the Canada Border Services Agency if they wish to return to Canada in the future.

### Appealing a denied claim

A person whose refugee claim has been rejected can appeal the decision or take other steps to delay or prevent their removal from Canada. As of late 2017, the following options are available:

- Applying to the Refugee Appeal Division (RAD) of the IRB. There are strict rules and procedures<sup>13</sup> about how to do this. From 2015 to 2017, the RAD found that about 20% of the appeals they heard had merit, with most of these sent back to the Refugee Protection Division for further assessment. In only 6-8% of cases, the RAD overruled the Refugee Protection Division and made its own determination to approve the claim.
- Applying for a pre-removal risk assessment<sup>14</sup>. This is possible only for people who have received permission from the Canada Border Services Agency and are eligible under IRCC rules<sup>15</sup>. The assessment is to determine whether a claimant is at risk of torture, persecution, cruel or unusual punishment, or death if they are sent back to their country of origin. In most cases, applicants who are approved for a PRRA become “protected persons” and are allowed to apply for status as permanent residents. A rejected claim can be appealed to the Federal Court of Canada, but if this appeal is unsuccessful, the applicant must leave Canada immediately.
- Applying for permanent status on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. This is discussed in the next section.
- Applying for judicial review at the Federal Court of Canada. The claimant or their lawyer must be able to prove that the decision by the IRB member was wrong, or not fair or reasonable. This is a very expensive process and is highly unlikely to succeed without a lawyer. The court agrees to hear only about 20% of the refugee cases brought to it, and about half of those are successful. A claimant can stay in Canada until the Court makes its decision. A successful decision does not mean the claimant gets refugee status; it means that the claimant’s case is returned to the Refugee Protection Division to be assessed again.

## Remaining in Canada without status

People who choose to stay in Canada without status are at serious risk of arrest, detention, and deportation. Issues facing people without status are covered later in this chapter.

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14 [goo.gl/x3vtMa](http://goo.gl/x3vtMa)

15 [goo.gl/hfmAFG](http://goo.gl/hfmAFG)

# Removal Orders

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There are three types of removal orders:

- Departure order – the person must leave Canada within 30 days, checking in with CBSA on the way out. People who leave Canada under a departure order can come back at any time if they are found admissible when they try to enter.
- Exclusion order – the person cannot return to Canada for one year.
- Deportation order – the person is permanently barred from Canada unless they get an Authorization to Return to Canada<sup>16</sup>.

People who make refugee claims get conditional removal orders that are cancelled if their claims are successful. If a claim is unsuccessful and all appeals are exhausted, the person must leave immediately. Canada Border Services Agency may issue a Canada-wide warrant for the arrest of someone who remains in the country under a removal order.

## § Section 3

# Applying on Humanitarian and Compassionate Grounds

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People who are not eligible for any other paths toward permanent status in Canada may choose to apply to live here on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. These cases are considered exceptional, and each is assessed individually.

When evaluating an application for status on humanitarian and compassionate grounds, IRCC considers the applicant's ties to Canada and how well established they are here, any risks of family violence, and the best interests of any children

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<sup>16</sup> [goo.gl/8QZL2B](https://goo.gl/8QZL2B)



who are involved. IRCC does not consider the types of factors that would make a person eligible for refugee status, such as risk of persecution or death.

An application in this category cannot be processed while a refugee claim is open, and it does not guarantee the right to stay in Canada while the applicant is waiting for a decision. There is also a “one-year bar” – an applicant cannot make this kind of application until at least a year after an unsuccessful refugee claim. This includes withdrawn and abandoned ones. Designated foreign nationals cannot make this kind of claim until five years after the designation was applied.

## § Section 4

# Issues and Concerns about Canada’s Refugee Determination System

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## High Variability of Acceptance Rates among IRB Members

Decisions are up to individual members of the IRB. The Canadian Council of Refugees has demonstrated that much of a refugee claimant’s chance of a successful claim depends on which IRB member presides over the case or the appeal. In 2016, one IRB member granted refugee status in 95.9% of the cases they heard, while another granted status in only 23.8%.

In general, the acceptance rate is higher than it was before 2012, when IRB members were political appointees, some of whom denied every claim they heard. Members are now public servants. However, the large variability in acceptance rates among IRB members is still a cause for concern.

## Designated Countries of Origin

In 2012, the federal government established a list of designated countries of origin (DCOs) – 42 countries that “do not normally produce refugees and respect human rights and offer state protection.” Claims made by people from these countries are expedited to “deter abuse” of the refugee system. This means that such people have less time to collect documentation and prepare for a hearing.

The Canadian Council for Refugees, in looking at acceptance rates for refugee claimants, found that these rates were very high for some countries on this list. For instance, more than two thirds of the claims for refugees from Hungary were accepted in 2016, suggesting that Hungary may not be so safe after all.

From 2012 to 2015, refugee claimants from countries on the list were denied the right to appeal if their claims were rejected. In 2015, the Federal Court of Canada overruled this policy, finding it discriminatory and unconstitutional. A person’s country of origin is no longer grounds for denying an appeal, but people from the designated countries are still treated differently in a number of other ways.

## Immigration Detention

A person may be detained without charge by the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) for any of the following reasons:

- They are not able to prove their identity to the satisfaction of a CBSA employee
- They are deemed a “flight risk” (likely to hide from the government to avoid going to an immigration hearing or complying with a removal order)
- They are considered a threat to public safety or security
- They may have been involved with violating human rights or committing serious crimes
- The Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness designates the person as an “irregular arrival”

Some detainees are people who have been ordered deported but have no status or documentation enabling them to return to their country of origin. For some refugees, it is impossible to get official copies of government documents proving their identities. Governments may demand bribes, people may have had to flee without their identity documents, it may have been dangerous for them to travel under their real names, or

written records may not even exist. Canada has detained people in such situations for months or even years, despite the UN Refugee Convention's prohibition on doing so.

## Immigration Detention in Maximum-Security Prisons

Because there is not enough room in immigration detention centres, people who have never been charged with any crime are being held in maximum-security prisons with the general population. Some have been there for years, with no idea of whether or when they will ever be released. Children have been born as Canadian citizens to parents in immigration detention, and some have spent their first few years of life behind bars. At least 16 people have died in immigration detention since 2000.

Canada's system of immigration detention has been sharply criticized by the Canadian Council for Refugees, Amnesty International, and the UNHCR, among others. The Canadian Red Cross has begun monitoring detention centres to make sure that they comply with national and international standards, but there are still groups working to end immigration detention altogether<sup>17</sup>.

## Designated Foreign Nationals

IRCC classifies people as Designated Foreign Nationals when they enter Canada as a group, and when the Minister of Public Safety decides that there is human smuggling or trafficking involved, or the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) cannot interview members of the group about their identities or admissibility "in a timely manner." They are sometimes called "irregular arrivals." Many do not have proper documentation; some travel on documents that smugglers have provided to them.

The federal government created this category in 2012 as part of an effort to address human smuggling for profit or to benefit a criminal organization or terrorist group. However, the impact of being placed in this category falls on individual refugees, not those responsible for smuggling them. People who are desperate enough to seek the services of human smugglers or traffickers are extremely vulnerable. Yet a person classified as a Designated Foreign National faces serious consequences:

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17 [goo.gl/1RiQgj](http://goo.gl/1RiQgj)

- Mandatory imprisonment for two weeks, plus at least another six months if they cannot prove their identity
- Placement in a prison with the general inmate population, regardless of their language comprehension or mental state
- Lack of access to support for filing a refugee claim and preparing for a hearing, including translation and legal counsel
- No right to appeal a claim that is denied
- A five-year ban on applying for permanent residence even after a successful refugee claim

The [Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers \(CARL\)](#)<sup>18</sup> notes that detaining refugees for not having documentation violates the UN Refugee Convention, which Canada has signed. CARL and other groups have therefore been advocating against the “designated foreign national” classification.

## LGBTQ+ People

Many people who seek asylum in Canada do so because their sexual orientation or gender identity is highly stigmatized or even criminalized in their country of origin. People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, or transgender, including nonbinary and intersex people, are at risk of harassment, violence, arrest, torture, and sometimes murder in areas all over the world.

LGBTQ+ people face a particular challenge in demonstrating that they need protection, because many have had to hide a critical part of themselves in order to survive. Yet they are expected to prove their orientation or gender identity, with documentation, to be allowed into Canada.

### **Guidelines for Deciding Claims for LGBTQ+ People**

This challenge has led the Immigration and Refugee Board to develop guidelines for board members to use when they are making decisions about these cases. These guidelines were implemented in mid-2017, and require board members to be sensitive to cultural considerations, risks faced by claimants, and discomfort in talking about a topic they may have spent their whole lives trying to hide.

The treatment of refugee claimants from countries on the Designated Countries of Origin list has been a serious problem for some LGBTQ+ people who seek protection in Canada.

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18 [goo.gl/bbLxtN](http://goo.gl/bbLxtN)

Mexico was added to this list in 2013, implying that it is safe and unlikely to produce refugees, but a recent study cited by Égale found that more than three-quarters of LGBT people there have experienced physical violence because of their gender identity or sexual orientation. Discrimination in employment and access to public services is also common there.

## § Section 5

# Loss of Status

In some cases, someone who has received status as a protected person may have that status revoked. This can happen if that person goes back to the country that they fled, or if they apply for or renew a passport from that country.

CBSA, IRCC, and Passport Canada analyze people's travel histories and may determine that a protected person no longer needs Canada's support. In such cases, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship may apply for a "cessation" order to take away the person's status, even if they have been in Canada for many years. A refugee in this kind of situation should seek legal help immediately.

# People without Status

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As we covered in the previous chapter, many people face hardship because they live in Canada with temporary or precarious immigration status. There is another group even more vulnerable: people with no legal status here at all.

It is estimated that between 200,000 and 500,000 people live in this country without documentation, hiding from immigration authorities for fear of detention and deportation. Some are under removal orders, while others are completely "under the radar" with no official record that they are in Canada at all. There are several ways that someone can be in Canada without status.

# Expired Visas or Work Permits

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Sometimes people who enter Canada temporarily as students, visitors, or workers overstay their visas or work permits. Their status can be restored if they apply within 90 days of the expiry date and explain why they missed the deadline.

If they do not apply to get the status restored or they miss the 90-day window, a deportation order may be issued for their removal from the country, and they may be blocked from re-entering, depending on the type of removal order.

# Entering Canada “Irregularly”

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There are three ways to enter Canada: by air, sea, or land. It is difficult, but not impossible, to come into the country in a way that is not approved by the government.

**Arriving by air:** Flights into Canadian airports are tightly regulated, and commercial airlines require travellers to show travel documents to be allowed onto a plane. Generally, the only way that someone can enter Canada by air without legal authorization is by presenting falsified documents at a port of entry in an airport.

**Arriving by sea:** It is very unusual for people to enter irregularly by water because of the great distances between Canada and every other country except the United States. People who sneak into Canada this way enter either as stowaways, or on ships full of migrants, such as the Komagata Maru (in 1914), the MV St. Louis (in 1939), or the MV Sun Sea (in 2010). These incidents are rare enough that you are unlikely to encounter anyone who has come into Canada this way.

**Arriving by land:** The border between the United States and Canada is the longest undefended one in the world, and there are many places where it is possible to walk across without going through a legal port of entry. The number of people doing this has been rising since the US election in November of 2016, and the growing tide of xenophobia, racism, and threats to immigrants in that country ever since. Those who manage to enter Canada undetected have no legal status here at all.

# Wrap-Up

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In this chapter we have looked at how the government of Canada classifies and accepts Convention refugees, protected persons, and refugee claimants. We have also discussed precarious immigration status, and how people can end up with no status in Canada at all.

The next course is about how newcomers settle in Canada, and the immigrant and refugee-serving sector. It covers some of the most common issues that immigrants, refugees, and people without status may face, and discusses resources that you can consult to help you support them.

## Sources and Further Reading

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- [UNHCR Figures at a Glance](#)<sup>19</sup>, UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency.
- [Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees](#)<sup>20</sup>, UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency.

### Canada's Refugee System

- [How Canada's refugee system works](#)<sup>21</sup>, Government of Canada.
- [Resettlement from outside Canada](#)<sup>22</sup>, Government of Canada.
- [Government of Canada: Guide 6000 - Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad](#), Government of Canada<sup>23</sup> (contains clear definitions of both categories).

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20 [goo.gl/SzQ6qe](https://goo.gl/SzQ6qe)

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## Government-Assisted Refugees

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## Privately Sponsored Refugees

- [Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program<sup>25</sup>](#), IRCC.
- [Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program – Sponsorship Agreement Holders<sup>26</sup>](#), IRCC.
- [Private Sponsorship of Refugees<sup>27</sup>](#), Canadian Council for Refugees.
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## Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program

- [Blended Visa Office-Referred Program<sup>29</sup>](#), Refugee Sponsorship Training Program.

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- [Request to process following family members under the one-year window of opportunity provisions<sup>30</sup>](#), IRCC.

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## The In-Canada Asylum Program: Making a Claim

- [An introduction to Canada's refugee determination system<sup>31</sup>](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (video).
- [Apply – Refugee status from inside Canada<sup>32</sup>](#), IRCC.
- [Your refugee claim: Before you get started<sup>33</sup>](#), Legal Aid Ontario.
- [The Refugee Claim Process<sup>34</sup>](#), Community Legal Education Ontario (flow chart).
- [Refugee Claim Process<sup>35</sup>](#), FCJ Refugee Centre (flow chart).

## The In-Canada Asylum Program: Eligibility for a Hearing

- [Who is not eligible for a refugee protection hearing?<sup>36</sup>](#), Community Legal Education Ontario.
- [The law says refugee claims must be heard in 60 days. So why are people waiting 16 months?<sup>37</sup>](#), Toronto Star.

## The In-Canada Asylum Program: Withdrawn and Abandoned Claims

- [Processing in-Canada claims for refugee protection: Withdrawals and Suspensions<sup>38</sup>](#), IRCC.

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## The In-Canada Asylum Program: Unsuccessful Claims

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- [Refugee Appeals Statistics](#)<sup>40</sup>, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada.
- [How does someone apply to the Federal Court for judicial review?](#)<sup>41</sup>, Community Legal Education Ontario.
- [Applying for a Pre-Removal Risk Assessment](#)<sup>42</sup>, IRCC: Guide 5523.

## Applying on Humanitarian and Compassionate Grounds

- [Humanitarian and compassionate grounds](#)<sup>43</sup>, IRCC.
- [Guide 5291 – Humanitarian and Compassionate Considerations](#)<sup>44</sup>, IRCC.
- [What Proof Do I Need for Humanitarian and Compassionate \(H&C\) Application?](#)<sup>45</sup>, Ontario Women’s Justice Network.

## Removal Orders

- [Removal from Canada](#)<sup>46</sup>, Canada Border Services Agency.

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## Issues and Concerns with Canada's Refugee Determination System

- [2016 Refugee Claim Data and IRB Member Recognition Rates](#)<sup>47</sup>. Canadian Council for Refugees.

## Immigration Detention

- [Canadian Immigration Detention](#)<sup>48</sup>, Global Detention Project.
- [Detention](#)<sup>49</sup>, Canadian Council for Refugees.
- [Legislating Discrimination in Canadian Immigration](#)<sup>50</sup>, Neverhome.ca
- [BSF5012 - Information for People Detained Under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act](#)<sup>51</sup>, IRCC.

## Designated Foreign Nationals

- [Operational Bulletin 440-D - August 30, 2012: Designated Foreign Nationals – Restrictions on Applications for Permanent Residence](#)<sup>52</sup>, IRCC.
- [Designated Foreign Nationals Regime](#)<sup>53</sup>, Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers.

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## LGBTQ+ People Seeking Asylum

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## Loss of Status

- [Common questions – How can a refugee lose their status in Canada?](#)<sup>55</sup>, Your Legal Rights.

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## CHAPTER 5

# Critical Frameworks for Understanding Work with Immigrants and Refugees



## Learning Outcomes

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Upon completion of Chapter 5, you will be able to:

- Apply your understanding of anti-racism, anti-oppression, intersectionality, and related key concepts to enhance your work with immigrants, refugees, and people without status in Canada.
- Reflect on your own social location, identities and experiences
- Develop best practices on how to support service seekers.

## § Section 1

# Grounding

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This chapter provides a critical foundation for the rest of this online training. It is important that this foundation be informed by an understanding of the ongoing role of colonization in Ontario, Canada, and our complicity in this as settlers.

As we fight for the rights of racialized, immigrant, and refugee people and communities, we understand that we must do so in allyship with Indigenous people and communities, and in no way at their expense.

Understanding the “making” of Canada reveals a violent, intentional ideological perspective and corresponding systems from the past to present.

Here is a very brief review of some of the history from Part 1.

- ○ **Mid-1500s onwards**  
The Doctrine of Discovery that encouraged Europeans to explore and claim land
- ○ **1500s onwards**  
Genocide of Indigenous peoples
- ○ **1876 onwards**  
The Indian Act, the residential school system, the 60s scoop, and other policies and practices to regulate and restrict the lives of Indigenous peoples
- ○ **Early 1600s onwards**  
Enslavement and exclusion of Black communities
- ○ **Mid-1900s onwards**  
Selective immigration policies and practices including the Chinese Head Tax and the continuous journey regulation

- **WWI and WWII**  
Internment of Japanese Canadians and Ukrainian Canadians
- **Mid-1900 onwards**  
Restrictions on immigrants and refugees, including indefinite detention
- **Current**  
Disproportionate experience of criminal justice and health systems
- **Current**  
Anti-Black racist policing practices such as carding or street checks

## Using Frameworks

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This chapter introduces critical frameworks – anti-racism and especially anti-oppression – that you are encouraged to apply in your own work.

But what exactly is an anti-oppression framework? And how can you use it? This chapter will provide you with some tools of analysis that you can use in your daily practice.

### § Section 2

## Race and Racialization

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**Race** is socially constructed but has real implications in terms of access, opportunity, and quality of life.

There is no biological or genetic basis for any race. In fact, there are more genetic differences within racial groups, than between them. Learn more in the article [Race is a Social Construct, Scientists Argue<sup>1</sup>](#) by Megan Gannon.

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1 [goo.gl/Xpe9Rq](http://goo.gl/Xpe9Rq)

**Racialization** is a process where value is attributed to people based on their attributes such as skin colour, hair texture, and features.

To point to the *process*, the term **racialized** is used. This term is preferred over the term “visible minority” as the latter is focused on numerical representations. The Ontario Human Rights Code uses the term “racialized,” and describes “visible minority” as outdated and inaccurate.

## Racism

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Racism refers to the fear or hatred of racialized individuals and communities.

Racism can take place at different levels.

### Internalized

Internalized racism occurs when racialized individuals absorb the racist attitudes of being inferior, or understand mistreatment as an individual or personal failing rather than a social problem.

Example: the idea that racialized, immigrant or refugee women can have that they are less worthy because of their looks or how they dress, given media representations of beauty.

### Interpersonal

Interpersonal racism occurs on the individual level. This type of racism is often the easiest to discuss, and dismiss. Interpersonal racism does not have to be overt (like being called a racial slur by a stranger on the street) – it can occur subtly, as a “microaggression.”

Microaggressions can be comments like “You’re so articulate” or “Where are you really from?”. They can be unwanted touching, such as feeling a racialized person’s hair or skin. Microaggressions are by definition very small, but their effects build up over time. They come from the assumption that the target of them is strange or “exotic” - different from the accepted norms.



## Systemic

Systemic racism refers to a conscious or unconscious belief system that excludes and marginalizes racialized people.

One example is the belief that Muslim women are always victims of violence given their “culture.”

## Institutional

Institutional racism includes policies, practices, and institutional structures that impact racialized people’s lives, experiences, and access.

Here are two examples:

- An agency that supports diverse survivors of gender-based violence requires “Canadian experience” in the social services sector to be eligible for employment
- A bereavement policy defines time for bereavement as 2 days, excluding those who must travel or observe multiple days for death practices

## Anti-Racism

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### **Anti-racism involves:**

1. Understanding how race and racism negatively affect Indigenous and racialized people at each level;
2. Examining power imbalances between racialized and white people, including how they offer unearned privileges to white people;
3. Developing actions and strategies to eliminate or address racism.

## Anti-Indigenous racism

The racism perpetuated against Indigenous peoples in Canada is specific and distinct given the context of ongoing colonialism.

## Anti-Black racism

The racism perpetuated against Black communities in Canada is specific and distinct given the context of slavery and ongoing formal exclusion.

## Anti-immigrant sentiment

The racism perpetuated against racialized immigrant and refugee communities is specific and distinct given settler colonial understandings of who “belongs” in Canada and which immigrants are good immigrants, and the mythology of refugees as queue-jumpers here to take away the jobs of “Canadians.”

Find out more: [What is anti-racism?](#)<sup>2</sup>

Calgary Anti-Racism Education (CARED), 2015.

# Oppression and Anti-Oppression

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Oppression is the use of power to marginalize or disempower an entire social group or category, often while it further privileges the oppressor.

Anti-oppression refers to strategies, theories, and actions that challenge socially and historically built inequalities and injustices that are ingrained in our systems and institutions by policies and practices that enable certain groups to dominate other groups.

Here are some examples of anti-oppression in action:

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<sup>2</sup> [goo.gl/r5g5qS](http://goo.gl/r5g5qS)

- An organizational statement on anti-oppression that makes it clear to clients, partners, staff, volunteers and the broader community how the organization thinks about its work
- A bias-free recruitment strategy to address under-representation of racialized, immigrant and refugee, LGBTQIA+, and disabled communities in staff roles
- Anti-oppressive practice in a training program for social workers that informs how therapists support clients -- understanding how systems of racism, homophobia, anti-immigrant sentiment, and more can cause distress and harm
- Reviewing, evaluating, and reorganizing programs and services with the direct input of community groups who have faced barriers in accessing them
- Ensuring that spaces where services are provided are accessible and welcoming

## Understanding Differences

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Systems of power create differences in experiences, and these differences affect how support can be accessed or provided. This chapter examines how differences are understood and how to reflect on them.

### Privilege



*“Unearned power that gives dominant group members economic, social, and political advantages. It can also include rights that are denied to others and should be available to all.”*

Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations

The concept of “privilege” is a way to explain why different people and groups have different levels of access to resources, power, and justice. Because each of us has many different aspects to our identities, it is possible to hold privilege in one area and lack it in another. If we do not reflect on our identities and social locations, it is easy to miss our own privilege, and to assume that our experiences and opportunities are common to everyone.

There are certain aspects of identity that are generally considered to be the default in the dominant society. These include being cisgender (not transgender), male, white, heterosexual, and nondisabled, among others.

One of the most commonly discussed forms of privilege is that which comes from being considered “white.” Having white privilege does not mean that a person has an easy life; it just means that their perceived race does not make their life more difficult. “Privilege” as a concept is perhaps best understood through examples:

- A person who can climb stairs has access to many businesses, services, and residences that a person who uses a wheelchair cannot enter.
- A person of average size can easily find clothing that fits well and flatters them.
- A cisgender person does not need to worry that their gender identity and presentation may prevent them from finding a job or receiving adequate medical care.
- A young married man who is looking for work will not be passed over because a hiring manager fears he may become pregnant and ask for leave.

Any of these people may experience discrimination and oppression because of other aspects of their identity – for instance, they may be estranged from their families because they are gay, or they may have a hard time finding work or housing because they wear clothing that reflects their religious faith.

Writer Francesca Ramsey and animator Kat Blaque have made a short video, *“Sometimes You’re a Caterpillar,”* to show how easy it is to miss one’s own privilege, and how rewarding it can be to work to include everyone.<sup>3</sup>

## Intersectionality

The term intersectionality was coined by Black feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989.

She introduced intersectionality *“as a way of framing the various interactions of race and gender in the context of violence against women.”*

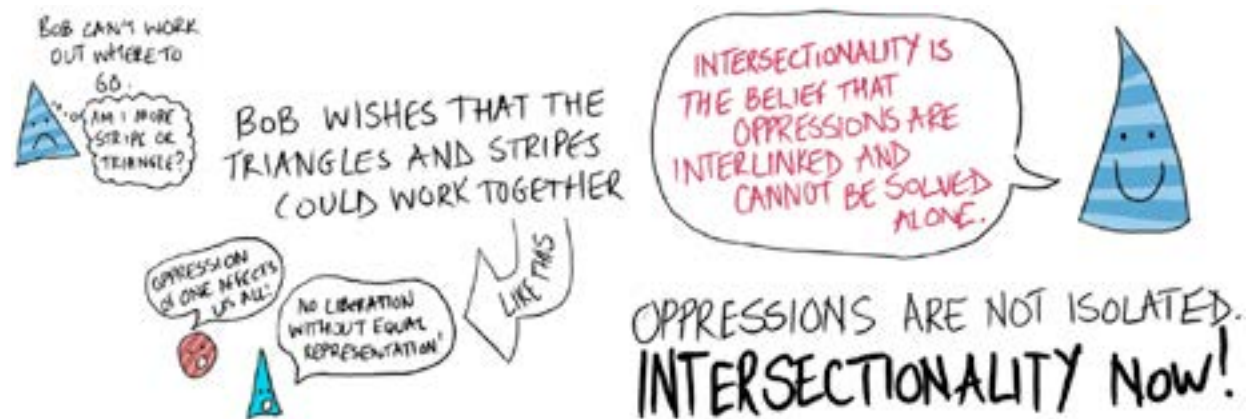
Intersectionality recognizes the multiple systems of power that affect aspects of our individual identities that cannot be separated.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://goo.gl/F1K7eC>

## Intersectionality at the Individual Level

To understand intersectionality at the individual level, Miriam Dobson developed the short comic called [Bob the Triangle](#)<sup>4</sup>. The comic depicts how Bob experiences the effects of intersectionality.



## Social Location

Your social location is your place or position in history and society.

- All people have a social location that is defined by their gender, race, social class, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation, geographic location, and so forth.
- Some aspects of your social location may change, while others are fixed.
- Understanding your social location requires understanding systems of power and being self-reflective

## Social Location and Self-Reflection

Think about your own social location – the ways in which you have experienced privilege and marginalization based on various parts of your identity and experience.

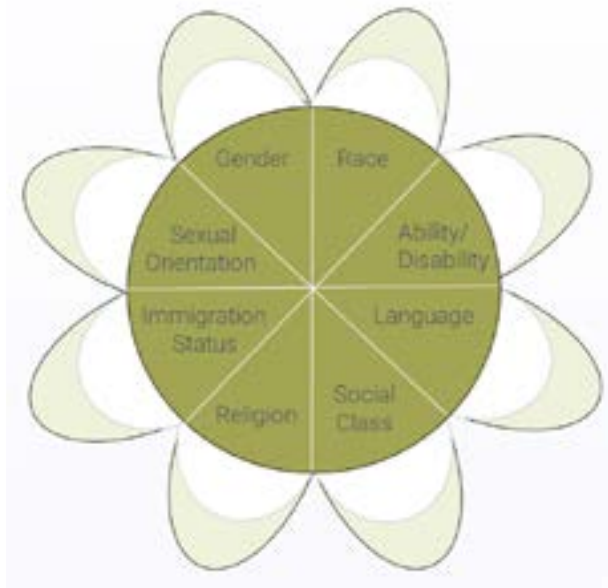
This reflection is important – because of the need to shift the dominant understandings of who is valuable, and because this reflection can help you to be a better front-line worker supporting immigrants and refugees, by giving you tools to understand and appreciate the complexities of those who are accessing services.

<sup>4</sup> [goo.gl/Tjdo15](http://goo.gl/Tjdo15)

# The Power Flower - Step 1

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This activity will help you consider how different aspects of your identity affect your experiences of privilege and marginalization.



Each petal represents a different dimension of identity:

- Sexual orientation
- Gender
- Race
- Immigration status
- Language
- Ability or disability
- Religion
- Social class

For the outer petal, write what you think is the dominant group of a particular category in Ontario.

For example you would write “English” in the language petal because English is the language that arguably provides the greatest privilege to its speakers in Ontario, even though it is a bilingual province.

What do you think is the **dominant group** for each category?

# The Power Flower– Step 2

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For the inner petal, please write how you identify within each dimension for identity.

For example, if English is your first language, under language, write “English.” If another language is your first language, write that instead. Do this for each of the petals.

How do **you identify** within each dimension for identity?

# Your Power Flower

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Which aspects of your identity match with the socially dominant group?

Which aspects of your identity differ?

Adapted from the [Power Flower Exercise in the LGBTQ2S Toolkit](#)<sup>5</sup>,

National Learning Community on Youth Homelessness, 2014.

## Reflection: Your Social Location

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Reflecting on your multiple experiences and identities, answer each question:

1. Which identities do you think about most often?
2. Which identities do you think about the least often?
3. Which identities would you like to know more about?
4. Which identities have the strongest effect on how you perceive or understand yourself?
5. Which identities have the strongest effect on how others perceive you?

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<sup>5</sup> [goo.gl/3SQPiV](http://goo.gl/3SQPiV)

## “Passing”

Someone who “passes” can be perceived as belonging to another group, especially one with more privilege.

The term originally referred to **racialized people who could appear as white**. With an expanded understanding, passing can refer to race, gender, sexuality, and more.

Passing can be understood as **privilege**, since being received in the world as belonging to a dominant group **can afford access**.

But passing is complex. There are situations where passing may be necessary, to ensure survival (such as transgender women who may be at risk of violence due to systemic transphobia).

## White Supremacy

While many conversations about social location may point only to the concept of privilege, it is important to look at the structures that create privilege.

The term “white supremacy” may bring up specific images (like the Ku Klux Klan), but it actually refers to a structure or system where whiteness is seen as more valuable, better, the norm, and something to be maintained.

White supremacy is not only “extreme” groups or activities - it is the system that supports the exclusion of marginalized groups, including racialized immigrants and refugees.

Here are some examples of white supremacy in our society.

- **Political representation** is overwhelmingly white
- **Beauty standards** in all media (including social media) centre white people as the ideal
- **White people** feel less empathy for racialized people’s pain
- **The statement** “I don’t see colour” erases people’s experiences of racialization and oppression
- **99 of the top 100** grossing films (globally) in 2016 were directed by white American men



## Complicity

White supremacy underlies all of the ways our society functions. This is why even people who do not believe in white supremacy can be complicit.

Being complicit in a system means not actively challenging or disrupting it. If, for example, if your identity or social location puts you in a position of privilege during a conversation about racialized immigrants, staying silent when you hear racist or xenophobic comments can be complicity.

## Anti-Blackness

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Given the deep historical and current violence against Black communities globally, in Canada and in Ontario, it is important that front-line workers consider the ways in which anti-Black racism is perpetuated in our communities.

### Causes

Immigrant communities in particular can be complicit in anti-Black racism. This can be due to:

- Harmful understandings of beauty related to shadeism (whether in countries of origin or in Canada). Shadeism is a form of discrimination based on skin colour (not race), specifically the idea that darker skin means a person has less value or worth.
- Negative representation of Black community members in the media.
- Global anti-Black racism with its roots in slavery that frames non-Black migrants as more “worthy” or “hard-working.”
- Tensions within communities based on differences in social and economic class.

### Responses

In response to calls for action on anti-Black racism within racialized and immigrant communities, there have been important campaigns and actions.

In Canada, Asian community members developed a letter, addressed “Dear Mom, Dad, Uncle, Auntie, Grandfather, Grandmother: Black Lives Matter to Us, Too.”

The letter is available in at least 16 languages at the website [canada.lettersforblacklives.com](http://canada.lettersforblacklives.com).

## Taking Action

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It is important to take steps toward being an ally, strengthening your solidarity with marginalized groups.

- Understanding the ways in which oppression occurs makes it necessary for us to take action.
- We can take action to challenge racism and other forms of oppression at work, in our personal lives, in our communities, and more.
- Think about how you can challenge oppression in your role as a front-line worker supporting immigrants and refugees.

## Solidarity

Solidarity means taking action against the oppression of groups that you do not belong to. To work in solidarity with other groups, you must educate yourself about their experience and use language that is respectful to them. You should also practice active listening and speak up when you see or hear harmful stereotypes. Also, remember what you want or prefer may not be appropriate or even welcome in certain spaces.

Solidarity Is for Everyone.

It is important to remember that solidarity is not just for people who are white who are interested in challenging racism. There are many ways that solidarity action is needed.

- To challenge the anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism that takes place in racialized communities.
- To challenge the anti-immigrant sentiment that is expressed in communities (including anti-refugee statements made within immigrant communities who have been in Canada for some time).
- To challenge the ways settler colonialism is perpetuated by racialized immigrant and refugee communities.

## Moving through Guilt

Conversations about power, privilege and solidarity can sometimes bring up feelings of guilt.

As Jamie Utt says, *"If privilege guilt prevents me from acting against oppression then it is simply another tool of oppression."*

- Reflect on yourself, your own social location, and your actions and words
- Understand your role in oppression, including the ways you are complicit
- Recognize that knowing you have privilege is not enough
- Participate in community efforts
- Be sure you understand why you felt guilty. This can help you remember that you have a responsibility to take action.

## Organizational Responsibilities

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Your organization has a role to play in challenging oppression as well.

Keep in mind that while our organizations are committed to social change, they are also part of a larger system that replicates systems of hierarchy, power, and control.

### Policies

- Reviewing existing policies, including ones about human resources, to make sure they are fair and equitable.
- Reviewing existing policies to be mindful that front-line workers may also be survivors of violence, torture, or other forms of trauma.

### Practices

- Ongoing capacity-building related to anti-oppression and equity for all staff
- A transparent process for making complaints about equity
- Built-in mechanisms for maintaining accountability.

- Hiring and promoting diverse staff. The representation and workplace experiences of diverse staff help demonstrate an organization's commitment and practice of anti-racism and anti-oppression.
- Reflecting on the hiring practices and norms that may result in the current diversity of staff
- Access a [list of tips](#)<sup>6</sup> from DiverseCity onBoard that could help your workplace diversify.
- Ensuring that community members' experiences of oppression are understood when planning and delivering programs and services.

## Reflection: What Next?

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Take some time to reflect on the content of this chapter. Pay particular attention to what surprised you, or brought up discomfort for you.

How do you think you would be able to use an anti-racism, anti-oppression, intersectional framework in your work?

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# Wrap-Up

Anti-racism, anti-oppression, intersectionality and other key concepts form the foundation on which front-line workers can best support immigrants and refugees.

In the context of the ongoing colonization of Canada, this chapter encourages front-line workers to understand systems of power and reflect on their own social locations, identities, and experiences.

## Sources and Further Reading

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### Grounding

- [History in our Faces on Occupied Land: A Race Relations Timeline](#)<sup>7</sup>, Vancouver Status of Women, 2008.
- [A Four-part Series on Canada's Relationship with Native North America](#)<sup>8</sup>, Colours of Resistance Archival Website.

### Race and Racialization

- [One Vision, One Voice: Changing the Ontario Child Welfare System to Better Serve African Canadians](#)<sup>9</sup>, Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, 2016.
- [Fact Sheet: Root Causes of Violence Against Aboriginal Women and the Impact of Colonization](#)<sup>10</sup>, Native Women's Association of Canada, 2015.
- [What Black Lives Matter Organizers are Doing to Fight White Supremacy at Every Level](#)<sup>11</sup>, Bustle.Com, 2017.
- [Racial Discrimination, Race and Racism \(Fact Sheet\)](#)<sup>12</sup>, Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2016.

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7 [goo.gl/qFpe61](http://goo.gl/qFpe61)

8 [goo.gl/fzJCLP](http://goo.gl/fzJCLP)

9 [goo.gl/bKXFVy](http://goo.gl/bKXFVy)

10 [goo.gl/hv7hPG](http://goo.gl/hv7hPG)

11 [goo.gl/n3hoNR](http://goo.gl/n3hoNR)

12 [goo.gl/hhgXzS](http://goo.gl/hhgXzS)

## Anti-Racism

- [What is Anti-racism?](#)<sup>13</sup>, Calgary Anti-Racism Education (CARED), 2015.

## Intersectionality

- To help us understand why intersectionality is a priority, [Rhea Ewing has developed a comic on Everyday Feminism](#)<sup>14</sup>

## The Power Flower

- [Adapted from the Power Flower Exercise in the LGBTQ2S Toolkit](#)<sup>15</sup>, National Learning Community on Youth Homelessness, 2014.

## “Passing”

- [The trouble with ‘passing’ for another race/sexuality/religion](#)<sup>16</sup> ..., Koa Beck, The Guardian, 2014.
- [Forms of Privilege](#)<sup>17</sup>, Media Smarts: Canada’s Centre for Digital and Media Literacy.
- [Why Passing is Both Controversial and Central to the Trans Community](#)<sup>18</sup>, Evan Urquhart, Slate, 2017.
- [Janet Mock Breaks Down The Uncomfortable Truth Of Pretty Girl Privilege](#)<sup>19</sup>, Sarah Beauchamp, Nylon, 2017.

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13 [goo.gl/t1cL9F](http://goo.gl/t1cL9F)

14 [goo.gl/Kh4jSs](http://goo.gl/Kh4jSs)

15 [goo.gl/u1xLfb](http://goo.gl/u1xLfb)

16 [goo.gl/H7MvnZ](http://goo.gl/H7MvnZ)

17 [goo.gl/k2UM5y](http://goo.gl/k2UM5y)

18 [goo.gl/QzwFbY](http://goo.gl/QzwFbY)

19 [goo.gl/b6F87W](http://goo.gl/b6F87W)



## Moving through Guilt

- [True Solidarity: Moving Past Privilege Guilt](#)<sup>31</sup>, James Utt, Everyday Feminism, 2014.

## Organizational Responsibilities

- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)<sup>32</sup>, Reclaimed Honour
- [Violence Against Women: Health and Justice for Canadian Muslim Women](#)<sup>33</sup>, Canadian Council of Muslim Women
- [The Canadian Association of Muslim Women in Law \(CAMWL\) Condemns Quebec's Discriminatory Bill 62 Legislation](#)<sup>34</sup>, MuslimLink.Ca

## Videos

- To understand microaggressions, watch this [short video](#)<sup>35</sup>.
- Watch this [animated video](#)<sup>36</sup> to learn more about privilege.
- Watch Kimberlé Crenshaw's [TED talk](#)<sup>37</sup> about intersectionality from 4:54-13:56 minutes.

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31 [goo.gl/gNly4K](http://goo.gl/gNly4K)

32 [goo.gl/yjHGLA](http://goo.gl/yjHGLA)

33 [goo.gl/Z7XQnG](http://goo.gl/Z7XQnG)

34 [goo.gl/Ey7eMV](http://goo.gl/Ey7eMV)

35 [goo.gl/q5Nd3Z](http://goo.gl/q5Nd3Z)

36 [youtu.be/hRiWgx4sHGg](http://youtu.be/hRiWgx4sHGg)

37 [goo.gl/UYmSsc](http://goo.gl/UYmSsc)



## CHAPTER 6

# Delivering Settlement Services in Ontario



## Learning Outcomes

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Upon completion of Chapter 6, you will be able to:

- Discuss the history of settlement services in Ontario in general terms
- Understand how services for immigrants and refugees are funded and delivered in Ontario
- Describe principles, values, standards, and best practices in the immigrant and refugee-serving sector
- Understand program evaluation and requirements for reporting to the funders

## § Section 1

# What Are Settlement Services?

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Settlement services are the programs and other forms of assistance that are available to immigrants and refugees who have come to Canada.

In this chapter we focus on the formal services offered by immigrant and refugee-serving agencies, most of which are non-governmental and community-based.

These services can include any of the following:

- Orientation to the local area
- Information and referrals to community and government services and programs
- Language training
- Interpretation and translation
- Employment counselling
- Job search workshops
- Housing help
- Help with filling out forms and applications
- Outreach to assess the needs of the community
- Advocacy on behalf of service seekers
- Social events

Can you think of any others?

Many organizations offer these and other services in service seekers' own languages.

# A Brief History of Settlement Services in Canada

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## Communities helping themselves

In the first half of the 20th century, many settler Canadians recognized the need to “Canadianize the newcomers,” but there was very little formal support to do so. For the most part, support for immigrants came from within their own communities. Representatives of ethnic and religious groups met people at ports of entry, and looked after their immediate needs.

Settlement services have evolved a lot in Canada from the 1900s to current times.

## Settlement houses

Some settler Canadians felt a moral duty to do settlement work, in order to foster community and connections among different groups. From 1900 until the start of World War I, they opened “settlement houses” modeled on similar organizations in Great Britain and the United States.

Settlement houses were places where white, educated, middle-class Canadians, usually women, lived voluntarily with high concentrations of immigrants in impoverished conditions, offering education and advocacy. They emphasized cooperative learning and mutual support in their educational programs, and referred to the people they served as “members” or “neighbours” rather than “clients.”

## Canada’s colonial project

The values of the settlement house movement went against the values of many other philanthropic organizations at the time. People who worked in settlement houses did not believe that poverty represented personal failure or that charity caused dependence. However, even though the settlement workers wanted to establish egalitarian spaces and communities, there was still a difference in power between them and those they served. There was also an underlying assumption that their middle-class, Anglo-Canadian values were superior. Settlement houses, while progressive in many ways, were still very much part of Canada’s colonial project.

## More formal settlement services

Except for the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society, founded in 1922, almost all formal immigrant-serving agencies in Ontario were established after World War II. Some served specific communities, while others were more broad-based.

## Existing organizations

Some churches and other existing organizations, such as the YMCA and YWCA, began to offer settlement services such as language classes. Many ethnic and community-based organizations helped newcomers find housing and jobs, and navigate Canadian bureaucracy. They also ran social clubs and events. In many cases, immigrant communities themselves started services that were later funded by the government.

## Post-war migration

Early on, Anglo-Canadian settlement workers did not know much about social work, or the backgrounds or cultures of the people they were supporting. For the most part, they did not even see themselves as providing settlement services.

By the 1950s, the mass post-war migration into Canada made the need for more training and cultural awareness very clear. Churches, the YMCA and YWCA, and the Red Cross provided more settlement services, with trained social workers supervising volunteers.

## Italian Immigrant Aid Society

The Italian Immigrant Aid Society was founded in 1952 to meet the basic needs of Italian newcomers. It merged in 1981 with COSTI, another organization started in 1962 to help Italian tradespeople secure the qualifications they needed to work in Canada. COSTI now serves a wide variety of cultural communities, and is the largest immigrant and refugee-serving agency in Canada. Another organization, the International Institute of Metropolitan Toronto, existed between 1957 and 1975 to run activities for newcomers, and raise Canadians' awareness about them and their needs.

## A broad range of nationalities

The increase in immigrants and refugees arriving from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin and South America since the 1960s has compelled immigrant and refugee-serving agencies to change their programming, which had mostly been for people familiar with European cultural norms.

## Welcome Houses

The government of Ontario provided settlement services directly to newcomers from 1973 until 1995 through Welcome Houses. These were first started to support Ugandans of Asian descent who had been expelled by Idi Amin, but later they offered services to all immigrants and refugees. The Welcome Houses used a client-centred approach and offered a broad variety of services in a single place. The Welcome House model was so notable that other governments studied it, but the provincial government cut funding and ended the program in 1995.

## The immigrant and refugee-serving sector in Ontario

Nowadays, some settlement services in Ontario are offered by educational institutions, but most are provided by a network of focused, community-based non-profit agencies with volunteer boards of directors. As of 2017, 225 agencies are members of OCASI, formed in 1978. Some serve specific ethnic communities, while others support immigrants and refugees in general.

## General public services provide focused support

There are also organizations and agencies serving the general public that offer focused support for immigrants and refugees as well. These range from very large organizations such as the YMCA and YWCA to much smaller ones such as community health centres, job search centres, and women's shelters.

## Churches and religious groups

Another organized source of support for newcomers is churches and other religious groups. Some sponsor refugees, offer English classes, or meet people's immediate needs for food, clothing, shelter, and transportation.

# How Have Services Been Funded and Delivered?

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The funding of settlement services has historically been shared by government and charitable organizations. Each new government's immigration policies affect how services are funded.

Each of the key dates below shows how funding has changed and shifted over time.

## pre-WWII

Before World War II, settlement agencies were funded as charities, through private donations.

## 1948

The state was not involved in settlement services until 1948, when the federal government began providing them directly to deal with an influx of war refugees and family members of Canadian soldiers.

## 1966

Services provided directly by the government ended in 1966, when the new Department of Manpower and Immigration determined that immigrants should turn to the same "mainstream" services as other Canadians. Churches and community organizations continued to provide formal programming tailored for newcomers, though.

## 1984

This ISAP followed by the Host Initiative, started as a pilot program in 1984 and made permanent in 1990. The Host Program connected newcomers with volunteers familiar with Canadian culture and communities. These volunteers helped the newcomers practice English or French, learn about available services, and connect with people and employers in the community.

## 1992

The Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program, established in 1992. The ISAP, Host Initiative, and LINC were administered by the immigration department (renamed Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC] in 1993) and provided by public, private, and community-based organizations.

### 1995

In 1995, as part of efforts to reduce the federal deficit, Finance Minister Paul Martin began the process of “settlement renewal.” This meant that the federal government sought to withdraw from administering settlement services directly, and devolve, or “download,” responsibility for this administration to the provinces, while also establishing national standards for service delivery. This was accompanied by cuts to federal spending on settlement programs. These initial cuts, followed by many more over the years since, have had major impacts on service providers, settlement workers, and service seekers. We will cover these impacts later on.

### 2008

In 2008, CIC brought in the “Modernized Approach to Settlement Services,” which consolidated funding and administration for the ISAP, LINC, and Host programs into a single entity, the Settlement Program, with the goal of increasing efficiency. This single program has six streams:

- Information and orientation
- Language and skills development
- Labour market participation
- Community connections
- Needs assessment and referrals
- Support services

### Current

These days, community-based non-profit settlement agencies are generally funded by federal, provincial, and municipal governments as well as private and corporate foundations. Some agencies conduct fundraising activities or charge fees for their services. A growing number are exploring **social entrepreneurship**, looking into projects that generate revenue.

## § Section 2

# Current Federal Programs

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The following is a list of the programs that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada funds in Ontario as of 2017. Not all programs are available in all areas. These programs may change or end, depending on the ideology and priorities of the government of the day.



**Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP)** – now part of the Settlement Program created under the Modernized Approach

- Started in 1974
- Provides funding to settlement agencies for direct services
- Offers practical support such as information, translation and interpretation, help with filling out forms, referrals to other agencies, and supportive counselling
- Consolidated all federally-funded language training programs under the immigration department in 1990, and established the Host Program permanently.

**Interim Federal Health Program**<sup>1</sup>

- Provides the same level of basic medical care to protected persons (including resettled refugees) and refugee claimants that is provided to permanent residents and citizens under provincial and territorial plans
- Also provides supplemental coverage (vision, dental, psychotherapy, home care, mobility aids) and prescription drug coverage, as well as the required Immigration Medical Exam

**Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)**<sup>2</sup>

- Provides free language training in English or French for eligible permanent residents (not citizens) and refugees (not refugee claimants)
- Offered through service provider organizations

**Resettlement Assistance Program**<sup>3</sup>

- Available to some refugees (but not to those who have claimed refugee status from within Canada)
- Offers information and referrals, loans for travel to Canada, counselling, translation and interpretation, and other assistance
- Offered through service provider organizations

**Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)**<sup>4</sup>

- Places settlement workers from community agencies into schools that have many newcomer students
- Enables workers to contact families, offer referrals and information for newcomers, and provide information about settlement needs to teachers and school staff

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1 [goo.gl/b4mB1d](http://goo.gl/b4mB1d)

2 [goo.gl/AZ16RD](http://goo.gl/AZ16RD)

3 [goo.gl/ijHNG6](http://goo.gl/ijHNG6)

4 [goo.gl/qaX12P](http://goo.gl/qaX12P)



### **Canadian Immigrant Integration Project**<sup>5</sup>

- Established as a pilot project in 2007 and a full-fledged program as of 2010. Partnership among the Government of Canada, the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, and a network of other organizations across Canada.
- Offers information and advice about labour markets, recognition of credentials, and connections to immigrant-serving programs and agencies before people arrive in Canada.

### **Library Settlement Partnerships (in Ontario)**<sup>6</sup>

- Places settlement workers in public libraries at specified times to offer information and referrals

### **Job Search Workshops**<sup>7</sup>

- Offered through immigrant and refugee-serving agencies across Ontario
- Provides individualized coaching and employment counselling, help with resumes and cover letters, practice interviews, and opportunities for professional networking

## Provincial Funding for Settlement

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The province of Ontario also funds settlement services. The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) provided about \$100 million to immigrant and refugee-serving agencies in the 2016-2017 fiscal year, to support settlement services such as orientation sessions and referrals to community services, [language training programs](#)<sup>8</sup>, and [bridge training programs](#)<sup>9</sup> for internationally trained newcomers to get certification and find work in regulated and highly skilled professions.

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5 [goo.gl/zfKP99](http://goo.gl/zfKP99)

6 [goo.gl/pqUxYK](http://goo.gl/pqUxYK)

7 [goo.gl/XZWBpt](http://goo.gl/XZWBpt)

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## § Section 3

# Changing Economic Priorities

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The core values that have informed immigration policy and settlement programs since the late 1980s have been economic. Neoliberalism, the belief that free markets and not governments are the best way to meet society's needs, has led to massive cuts to social services, and a restructuring of the immigration system to bring in more economic migrants and fewer refugees. Also, reuniting families has become a much lower priority.

These neoliberal values have had dramatic effects on settlement services and service providers. A lack of resources for settlement work

is nothing new, but the changes to how service providers are funded, as well as deep funding cuts since 2010, have destabilized the entire sector. Most agencies no longer have core funding for day-to-day operations; instead, they must spend a great deal of time and energy applying for funding for individual projects, and dealing with complicated systems for accountability and reporting outcomes. Agencies receive funding per immigrant or refugee, without regard for differing circumstances or needs.

## The Modernized Approach

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The Modernized Approach means that service providers can now negotiate a single agreement with the government instead of one for each program, and reach agreements that last three years, not one. This provides some agencies with some degree of stability, but not nearly as much as core funding for ongoing operating costs would.

Neoliberal approaches have also led funders to pay extremely close attention to how agencies establish target outcomes for their services, and how they measure the indications that these targets have been achieved. Funders want to know: Are we getting value for our money?

## What are the issues with this kind of accountability?

Scholars, advocates, policy analysts, and settlement workers have criticized this approach for many reasons.

- There is a major power imbalance between settlement agencies and funders.
- Funders agree to support only projects that meet their specified criteria, which may not align with the goals and expertise of the settlement agencies.
- Settlement agencies compete for the same pool of funding, with larger agencies often receiving it at the expense of smaller, more community-based ones.
- Settlement agencies are far more accountable to funders than to service seekers.
- Limited funding may mean that agencies must charge fees for services, shutting out people with low incomes.
- Strict criteria about who is eligible for certain programs restrict service seekers' access to services.
- Measuring short-term results does not give insight into how well newcomers integrate into Canadian society over time.
- Recording indicators is time-consuming for front-line workers.

## What are the issues with project-based funding?

[CERIS<sup>10</sup>](#) and OCASI have identified a number of issues with the model of project-based funding for immigrant and refugee-serving agencies.

- Agencies lack stability, reducing their ability to build capacity.
- There is an emphasis on short-term economic outcomes, not on long-term integration, even though immigrant-serving agencies have experience and expertise in this.
- Agencies are less able to meet the needs of immigrants and refugees.
- Settlement work is precarious and unpredictable. Precarious employment has been linked with harm to mental and physical health, and to relationships and communities.
- Short-term, project-based contracts lead to high employee turnover at agencies, increasing training expenses.
- Agencies lose institutional knowledge when people leave.
- Successful community projects are not sustainable because the funding for them comes to an end.
- Changes in government policies and priorities are often unpredictable, and mean that staff spend time reacting to change rather than innovating.

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10 [goo.gl/zCbM4G](http://goo.gl/zCbM4G)

- Clients are demoralized, often questioning their place in the system and the country, when programs and services that supported them disappear.

## The cuts in 2010

After sharp increases to funding for settlement services between 2005 and 2010, in 2010 the Federal government unexpectedly cut this funding in Ontario by \$44 million. 13 OCASI member agencies lost their contracts to provide services, and others had to scale back or end successful programs. These cuts hit agencies serving racialized communities, which already experience discrimination and a resulting lack of resources, particularly hard.

Immigrant settlement funding was cut again in 2012-2013 and 2015-2016.

## How settlement agencies have been affected

A 2016 OCASI report laid out the impacts of funding cuts on its member agencies. 47 agencies across the province reported cuts; many had to lay off staff or cut salaries, reorganize their structures and programming, and reduce the amount of service they could provide. Providers serving racialized service seekers perceived that their agencies received a disproportionately high proportion of the cuts, making it even harder for them to serve already marginalized communities.

### § Section 4

## How Services Are Delivered

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Settlement services are governed by complex agreements among all three levels of government. Settlement renewal and the Modernized Approach have led to an increased emphasis on accountability for service providers, requiring them to report frequently on the outcomes of programs, not just the numbers of people who use them.

Settlement agencies are also under pressure from funders to serve many people and reduce the number of interactions with each one. This has resulted in a shift in how agencies deliver services. In the past, most settlement workers managed caseloads of clients who visited them at individual agencies, often repeatedly over time, for support.

Nowadays, there are more settlement workers out in the community who meet with service seekers only a few times, and provide them with information and referrals. Examples of this kind of service delivery are the Settlement Workers in Schools and Library Settlement Partnerships programs, discussed a bit later in this chapter. This model can be effective for economic migrants, but it is often not sufficient for refugees or others with more acute needs.

Some settlement agencies, especially those in urban areas, are also joining other types of community agencies in multi-service community hubs, similar to the settlement house model of the early 1900s. These hubs offer space and staff for activities and programs about health, education, employment, social support, settlement and integration, recreation and arts, and community development.

## Principles and Values for the Sector

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People who work in the immigrant and refugee-serving sector are expected to uphold certain principles and values. The first chapter of this training covered several of these in depth.

As part of the settlement renewal process, in 1998 the Canadian Council for Refugees published a policy document about best settlement practices, laying out the following core values for the sector:

- Access
- Inclusion
- Client empowerment
- User-defined services
- Holistic approach
- Respect for the individual
- Cultural sensitivity
- Community development
- Collaboration

- Accountability
- Orientation towards positive change
- Reliability (trustworthiness)

## Another critical principle

The more recent work of Indigenous activists and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has brought another critical principle to light: the need to uphold settlers' treaty responsibilities and obligations to Indigenous peoples. To do this, settlers must work to understand the history of colonization and the sovereignty of Indigenous nations, and build mutually respectful relationships with Indigenous elders and communities.

# Program Standards

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When the federal government devolved responsibility for settlement programs to the provinces, there was concern that programs across the country would not be consistent. In 1999, OCASI and COSTI, one of the oldest and largest immigrant-serving agencies in Ontario, collaborated on a project to develop a discussion document about standards for the sector. Around the same time, the Canadian Council for Refugees struck a committee supported by the federal government, three provincial governments, and Ontario's Trillium Foundation, to discuss service standards as well. This committee consulted with government representatives, front-line workers, and immigrants and refugees. The result was the [Canadian National Settlement Service Standards Framework](#)<sup>11</sup>.

## How does this document address concerns?

This document sets out the sector's core values, best practice guidelines, and rights of immigrants and refugees in accessing services. It also lays out the values, knowledge, professional ethics, and skills expected of settlement workers, and the expectations about governance, operational policies and procedures, and community role of settlement agencies. Although it was released in 2000, it remains an important reference for everyone working in the immigrant and refugee-serving sector.

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11 [goo.gl/yrvGJo](http://goo.gl/yrvGJo)

# Best Practices

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Standards, according to the National Settlement Service Standards Framework, are “generally agreed upon minimum norms for programs.” Best practices are different: these are the approaches “that have proven their worth and deserve to be emulated.”

In 1998, the Canadian Council for Refugees completed a project investigating [best settlement practices](#)<sup>12</sup>. The federal government now provides a [list of examples of programs and services](#)<sup>13</sup> that they have identified as showcasing best practices and innovation in the immigrant and refugee-serving sector.

## Activity: best practices

Spend some time looking through the [IRCC website about best settlement practices](#)<sup>14</sup>.

- Do you see any themes among the programs listed there? What priorities for settlement do they emphasize?
- Do you see any similarities to your agency’s work? Could your agency adopt any of the practices described there? What would the benefits be? Do you see any possible drawbacks?

# Organizational Standards: OrgWise.ca

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One outcome of the movement to establish standards for immigrant and refugee-serving agencies has been the creation of OrgWise, a capacity-building and knowledge hub for organizations to:

- Assess how well they meet the voluntary standards for service provision established by OCASI in 2009
- Train staff and organizational leaders

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12 [goo.gl/wfp2cB](http://goo.gl/wfp2cB)

13 [goo.gl/i18wof](http://goo.gl/i18wof)

14 [goo.gl/WLJgsY](http://goo.gl/WLJgsY)

- Develop capacity
- Plan for long-term sustainability
- Manage organizational risks
- Demonstrate strengths and accountability to funders

## Four critical standards

OrgWise provides information and accessible online tools at [orgwise.ca](http://orgwise.ca) for organizations to respond to 190 “indicator statements” to generate a report assessing their adherence to four standards:

1. **Community-based approach:** strengthening communities; improving conditions for immigrants and refugees; communication and collaboration
2. **Governance and strategic leadership:** board roles and responsibilities; board structure and operations
3. **Operations:** operational and internal systems; learning and innovation, financial management, physical and technological infrastructure
4. **Human resources:** promoting a positive and equitable work environment; hiring, deployment, engagement, and retention; managing students and volunteers

## Is this assessment tool useful to me?

Although the OrgWise assessment tool is primarily for managers and administrators, it is useful for you as a settlement worker to familiarize yourself with the website and the many resources available there, including videos and webinars. If your organization does not use OrgWise, you may want to advocate for them to adopt it.

# Program Monitoring and Evaluation

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The federal Treasury Board requires each government program to have an evaluation group, because they want to understand the programs’ efficiency, effectiveness, and value for money. IRCC’s evaluation group therefore requires funded agencies to report regularly about their activities and the outcomes, so that they can measure performance, evaluate results, and make changes they believe will add value.



To do this, IRCC needs data. They want the details of every single interaction that a settlement worker at a funded agency has with a service seeker.

## What does this mean for front-line workers?

What this means on the front lines is that you must record interactions with service seekers as soon as possible after meeting with them. At many agencies, this involves entering details into the **Immigration Contribution Agreement Reporting Environment** system, or **iCARE**. Information entered into this system goes straight to IRCC.

Other agencies funded by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration must track interactions as well, usually through a spreadsheet, and file reports at the end of the year.

Many settlement workers find that entering this data is very time-consuming, and have expressed concern that the process means they have less time to spend face to face with service seekers. However, in the current environment, this process is necessary for continued funding.

## OCASI's Service Information System

To help agencies manage their reporting requirements, OCASI has led an initiative, funded by Ontario's Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, for the nonprofit organization LogicalOutcomes to develop the Service Information System (SIS) to provide a set of evaluation tools to help Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) improve their services to service seekers and their organizational capacity.

SIS is an evaluation platform that provides support for agencies to manage their own data and create reports that are useful for themselves as well as for funders. It has three main components.

Component 1: An indicator registry that provides SPOs with a bank of validated indicators related to common settlement outcomes and outputs

Component 2: A community data portal containing public datasets that can be analyzed at a local level. The portal provides a collection of data visualizations and interactive reports.

Component 3: Evaluation services that enable service provider organizations to plan their evaluation, collect data about their programs, and report the results in private customized dashboards.

## How can SIS help?

SIS can help both service provider organizations and funders.

### Service provider organizations

With SIS, service provider organizations can:

- Design and implement a customized evaluation system with minimal effort.
- Generate community profiles and interactive data visualizations based on national datasets.
- Nominate indicators that matter to their communities for inclusion into the indicator registry.

### Funders

Funders will be able to use SIS to:

- Disseminate and manage a collection of required and suggested indicators that are also relevant to their priorities
- Offer service provider organizations an optional platform for evaluation
- Test and co-design measurement instruments with service provider organizations

You can get started with SIS by watching the [brief how-to videos](#)<sup>15</sup> available on the SIS site.

## Wrap-Up

This chapter has looked at the delivery of settlement services in Ontario. The immigrant and refugee-serving sector exists to provide support for newcomers to Canada so that they can become integral parts of their new communities. This sector and the people who work within it prove that there is a strong commitment and sense of responsibility within Canada to welcome people and help them feel at home.

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<sup>15</sup> [goo.gl/hu2EDL](http://goo.gl/hu2EDL)

This brief overview of the history of settlement services, the ways that they have been funded, the principles and standards that govern them, and how they are evaluated and monitored all provide context for what happens between front-line workers and service seekers. In the next chapter, we will dig more deeply into settlement work itself.

## Sources and Further Reading

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### A Brief History of Settlement Services in Canada

- Cathy James, *Reforming Reform: Toronto's Settlement House Movement, 1900-1920*<sup>16</sup> (available from academic databases and through ResearchGate.net)
- Debbie Douglas and Amy Casipullai (2012) "History of Settlement Services in Ontario," in *Unsettled Settlers: Barriers to Integration*, edited by Soheila Pashang. Whitby, ON: de Sitter Publications. Pp. 55-78.
- Canadian Council for Refugees, *Best Settlement Practices: Settlement Services for Refugees and Immigrants in Canada*<sup>17</sup>
- Nuzhat Amin, *A preliminary history of settlement work in Ontario, 1900-present*<sup>18</sup>
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### How Have Services Been Funded and Delivered?

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## Changing Economic Priorities

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## What Are the Issues with Project-Based Funding?

- *Settlement & Integration (infographic)*<sup>20</sup>, CERIS
- *CERIS Final Report: Settlement and Integration Research Synthesis 2009-2013*<sup>21</sup>, CERIS
- *The Impact of Precarious Work on Workers' Lives*<sup>22</sup>, Law Commission of Ontario

## The Cuts in 2010

- *OCASI position on the 2011 cuts to Ontario settlement funding*<sup>23</sup>, OCASI.

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19 [goo.gl/scb6yM](http://goo.gl/scb6yM)

20 [goo.gl/bcWfQd](http://goo.gl/bcWfQd)

21 [goo.gl/E9UT4o](http://goo.gl/E9UT4o)

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## How Settlement Agencies Have Been Affected

- Telling Our Stories from the Frontline: Adverse Institutional Impacts of Cuts to Immigrant Settlement in Ontario<sup>24</sup>, OCASI

## How Services Are Delivered

- Brief on Community Hubs<sup>25</sup>, Toronto Neighbourhood Centres, 2015.

## Providing Settlement Services: Program Monitoring and Evaluation

- CIC Settlement Program Evaluation (2016/17) – David Kurfurst<sup>26</sup>
- Understanding CIC Evaluations and Reporting – David Kurfurst, Alicia Simms, and Marie-Eve Filteau<sup>27</sup>

## Program Evaluation: OCASI's Service Information System

- Service Information System for OCASI Member Agencies<sup>28</sup>

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24 [goo.gl/WbTB5D](http://goo.gl/WbTB5D)

25 [goo.gl/C97Ka9](http://goo.gl/C97Ka9)

26 [goo.gl/PiqYLN](http://goo.gl/PiqYLN)

27 [goo.gl/m8N1EJ](http://goo.gl/m8N1EJ)

28 [goo.gl/R46PRU](http://goo.gl/R46PRU)

## CHAPTER 7

# What Is Settlement Work?



## Learning Outcomes

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Upon completion of Chapter 7, you will be able to:

- Discuss definitions of and goals for “settlement” of immigrants and refugees, and how these have changed over time
- Describe the role of the settlement worker, and the scope of workers’ responsibilities
- Discuss how and why to set ethical boundaries around the work you do
- Understand why and how to engage in advocacy on behalf of individuals and about broader issues

## Reflection: What Is Settlement?

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1. What does “settlement” mean to you?
2. What are some of the factors that make it easy or difficult for people to settle in to their new home?
3. Do you think newcomers can ever feel fully settled in Canada? Why or why not?

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### § Section 1

## What Is Settlement?

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Settlement is a lifelong process of learning about and adapting to one’s new community and culture.

For most newcomers, the settlement process generally happens in four stages:

- Arrival and first days
- Acclimatization
- Adaptation
- Integration



The process is nonlinear and constantly evolving. People can move back and forth among stages, and sometimes experience several of them at once.

## What factors influence a newcomer's experience?

Ultimately the settlement process is unique to each person and set of circumstances, but it is also influenced by race, class, gender, ability, age, and other aspects of identity and social location.

The settlement process can even begin well before a newcomer arrives in Canada. People have long sought to learn about their destination from many sources, including friends and family, community newspapers, and books. The information collected these sources has not always been accurate; nowadays, the federal and provincial governments offer reliable information and help through pre-arrival services<sup>1</sup>.

## A "Two-Way Street"?

Canada's immigration policy framework characterizes settlement as a "two-way street," meaning that the host society must take action to welcome and accommodate newcomers. One way that Canada does this is by providing settlement services. Beyond this, though, Canadians who have been here for generations must be willing to adapt to the presence of people whose accents, appearances, or religious practices may differ from what is familiar.

Canada is, of course, a complex society, and the idea of the "two-way street" oversimplifies this complexity and erases the history, presence, and continuing role of Indigenous people on these lands. Keep this in mind as you learn and think more about settlement work.

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<sup>1</sup> [goo.gl/2WAh7y](https://goo.gl/2WAh7y)



# What Is Settlement Work?

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Settlement work is the work of supporting immigrants and refugees to meet their unique needs as they settle into their new community and their new lives. These needs vary from person to person and from group to group, and also differ greatly for each individual over time.

Settlement work happens in formal and informal contexts, and as scholar [Yidan Zhu](#)<sup>2</sup> points out, the boundary between these is blurred. Agencies and organizations offer formal settlement services from trained workers, but a great deal of settlement work is done by newcomers' families, communities, religious groups and spiritual leaders, and even neighbours.

## Case Study: Amit

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Amit, a 25-year-old highly skilled computer programmer from northern India, is fluent in English and has a job offer with a software company in Brampton, a medium-sized city with a large South Asian population. He has cousins in Brampton whom he has visited many times, and he has spent time with their friends. He has attended a Planning for Canada orientation session and a personalized My Action Plan session in New Delhi. One cousin has found an apartment for him near his workplace.

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2 [goo.gl/t6trj4](https://goo.gl/t6trj4)

## Reflection: Amit

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What services might Amit need?

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## Case Study: Basra

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Basra is a 26-year-old government-sponsored refugee from Syria who has arrived very recently in a small community in the Kingston area. Her husband and several other close family members were killed in the civil war, leaving alone her with three children under the age of five. She does not speak English. She can communicate well in spoken Arabic, but has little formal education. She shows signs of post-traumatic stress disorder.

## Reflection: Basra

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What services might Basra need?

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## Can You Measure Settlement Work?

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It is nearly impossible to quantify or measure settlement work because it takes so many forms, from simple face-to-face interactions to high-level policy work.

These are only a few examples:

- Picking up a newcomer family from the airport and giving them a tour of the city while taking them to their new apartment
- Directing a new neighbour to the local supermarket with the freshest vegetables or familiar foods
- Negotiating with a landlord on a newcomer's behalf
- Helping someone fill out forms to apply for a Social Insurance Number and the Child Tax Benefit
- Proofreading a resume and cover letter to help someone apply for a job
- Listening sympathetically to someone who is having trouble adjusting to the new culture
- Teaching English at a government-funded agency
- Translating promotional materials, such as brochures for public services, into a variety of languages
- Conducting and presenting research about how various immigrant and refugee communities connect with specialized services
- Contacting government officials to advocate for changes to discriminatory immigration policies

# Three Categories of Settlement Work

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[Adnan Türegün](#)<sup>3</sup>, a sociologist at York University, has described three categories of settlement work.

1. **Volunteer:** Settlement work as a “loose” occupation, done voluntarily by amateurs without any training in the field
2. **Social Worker:** Settlement work as a subspecialty of social work, done by social workers trained in issues of immigration and settlement
3. **Distinct Professional:** Settlement work as a distinct profession with its own standards and training protocols

Whether settlement work becomes more of a distinct profession will depend on how it is funded in the future. Later in the chapter we will discuss the benefits and drawbacks of professionalizing the sector.

## § Section 3

# Who Are Settlement Workers?

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*A settlement worker is a person employed to support immigrants and refugees.*

It might seem easy to define “settlement worker” at first.

But despite an increasing emphasis on professional training and certification for settlement counsellors, jobs in

the immigrant and refugee-supporting sector are often part-time and precarious. This raises the question: is a settlement worker between contracts still a settlement worker? Given the high rates of employee turnover, how many people are even in the sector?

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3 [goo.gl/pdXufD](http://goo.gl/pdXufD)

## Data on settlement workers

IRCC collects enormous amounts of data about service seekers, but in nearly 30 years, no one has collected reliable data about the professionals who support them. Anecdotes, observation, and self-reporting from OCASI member agencies suggest that settlement workers are mostly women, mostly immigrants, and mostly university-educated. Accurate data about who works in the sector would increase understanding of how attitudes toward gender and immigration affect job security and compensation.

For this book, we will use the following definition of settlement workers – but it is important to remember how much settlement work happens outside this context.



*Settlement workers are people employed to provide settlement help to immigrants and refugees, by organizations that focus on supporting this population.*

## The Role of the Settlement Worker

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As a settlement worker, you work directly with immigrants and refugees to help them navigate the systems and services in their new home. You are their advocate, one of their first connections to life in Ontario, and your support can be a lifeline as they adjust to what may be a very different culture, climate, and place.

These are some of the typical tasks that settlement workers perform. Different workers may do different tasks, and it is not likely that any one worker will do all of them. How many of these are part of your job?

- Assessing newcomers' needs and creating settlement plans
- Providing orientation sessions to individuals or groups about housing, employment, education, transportation, and other relevant topics
- Helping people fill out forms to apply for Social Insurance Numbers, Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) cards, the Child Tax Benefit, and other relevant government programs
- Referring service seekers to programs and other service providers
- Tracking service seekers' need for translation and interpretation at doctors' offices and schools

- Advocating on behalf of service seekers with institutions, employers, or landlords
- Educating service seekers about their rights and responsibilities under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canada Human Rights Act, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Employment Standards Act, and treaties with Indigenous peoples
- Providing information (but not advice!) about Canadian law
- Providing interpretation and translation as necessary
- Maintaining client records and program statistics, writing reports, and providing regular updates to supervisors and funders
- Assessing the needs of the community, and working collaboratively with service seekers, colleagues, and other service providers to meet those needs
- Recruiting, training, and supervising volunteers
- Participating in staff meetings and committees

## Who Regulates Service Workers?

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Your work is regulated by the Ontario Ministry of Labour and the Employment Standards Act. You can review the rules and regulations about workplaces, including work hours, at the [Ministry of Labour's website](#)<sup>4</sup>. You can also get questions answered about

employment rights through the [Ministry of Labour's Employment Standards Information Centre](#),<sup>5</sup> which offers information in 23 languages and dialects. Even if you do not need this information yourself, you should be familiar with it for the people you serve.

## Standards for Settlement Workers

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Though the National Settlement Service Standards Framework is still valuable today, work has continued on codifying standards, competencies, and ethics for settlement workers to address changing needs.

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4 [goo.gl/pvEBsb](http://goo.gl/pvEBsb)

5 [goo.gl/zDefPt](http://goo.gl/zDefPt)

**The Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of British Columbia (AMSSA)** has developed the [English Language Development and Settlement Service Worker Complete Competency Dictionary](#)<sup>6</sup>, which lists a large number of competencies and classifies them as general, or specific to certain roles such as management, administration, language teaching, settlement support, childcare, volunteer coordination, and employment support.

**The Ontario Council of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW)** has a [Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice](#)<sup>7</sup>. These are not specific to settlement work, but are a valuable source of guidance for professionals in the human services.

**Colleges that offer training programs** for settlement workers have developed curricula that include expectations about skills and competencies for their graduates. One example is [Seneca College's Social Service Worker Immigrants and Refugees program](#)<sup>8</sup>,

which teaches settlement counselling, case management, information and referral, community development, advocacy, fundraising and proposal writing, program planning and development, and grant writing. Other similar programs are offered at Fanshawe College and George Brown College, among others.

As of 2018, there is no consensus across the immigrant and refugee-serving sector in Ontario about standards and competencies for settlement workers. Do you think there should be? If so, who should develop the list, and what should be on it?

## Professionalization for Settlement Workers?

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A hot topic in the immigrant and refugee-serving sector is whether settlement work should be professionalized, that is, standardized and regulated by a governing body. In Ontario, some professions are regulated to protect public health and safety, and the people who work

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6 [goo.gl/CkLvzC](http://goo.gl/CkLvzC)

7 [goo.gl/RZsmBR](http://goo.gl/RZsmBR)

8 [goo.gl/a9xnEM](http://goo.gl/a9xnEM)

in those professions must take special training to earn a license or certificate. They must also engage in continuous professional development to keep their certification current.

Some argue that professionalization will bring a number of benefits to workers and the sector as a whole. Others have expressed concerns about requiring settlement workers to be certified. What do you think?

## Benefits

Some argue that professionalization will bring a number of benefits to workers and the sector as a whole:

1. Regulated professions generally receive more recognition, validation, and respect
2. Certified professionals are accountable to their governing body
3. A governing body can advocate collectively on behalf of its members
4. There are established, clear standards for professional ethics and expected quality of services
5. Making settlement work into a regulated profession may encourage people to see it as a career, thus reducing employee turnover in the immigrant and refugee-serving sector

## Concerns

Others have expressed concerns about requiring settlement workers to be certified.

1. Training and certification cost time and money. We know that access to these resources is unequal. Racialized people, people living in poverty, and members of other marginalized groups may not be able to afford courses or certification because of the costs involved. Yet their lived experiences may make them experts in how to support newcomers.
2. The immigrant and refugee-serving sector is a valuable source of jobs for many immigrants and refugees whose professional qualifications in other fields are not recognized in Canada. Certification in settlement work would be yet another barrier for them.
3. Settlement work is not a clinical practice, and does not involve the same sort of risk that other regulated professions, such as nursing and skilled trades, do.



# What Attributes Do Settlement Workers Need?

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As discussed earlier, there is no sector-wide consensus in Ontario about what attributes, skills, and competencies are expected for people who serve immigrants and refugees. Different agencies may have different expectations.

These are see some of the expectations that may be placed on settlement workers:

- Cultural sensitivity
- Client-oriented service
- Ability to build relationships and partnerships
- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Presentation skills
- Ability to work on a team
- Knowledge of the community and its resources
- Ability to maintain confidentiality
- Organizational and administrative skills

## Reflection: Settlement Worker Skills

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What do you think are the most useful skills for you in your work? Do you think these should be required for all settlement workers? Why or why not?

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## § Section 4

# Settlement Work and Cultural Considerations

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As you introduce Canadian cultural norms and expectations to the people you serve, you should also be sensitive to the norms and expectations of their cultures. This may be easier if you are from the same culture, but bear in mind that everyone's experience of their own culture is unique. Keep an open mind and listen carefully, without judgement, and pay attention to the service seeker's emotions as well as their words.

Some of the most difficult issues that newcomers face have complex cultural components, and even immigrants and refugees who have lived here for many years may not be willing to reach outside their cultural community about sensitive topics such as mental illness, family finances, or domestic abuse. They may insist on services from someone who they feel understands their culture.

## Issues of trust and confidentiality

Some who are experiencing difficulties that are culturally taboo may avoid providers from their own communities, fearing that private information may become public. They may not trust your assurances of confidentiality, and they may insist on seeing someone at a mainstream service provider, or decline a referral if the language barrier is too great.

The referral you want to make may be very suitable for one service seeker from a given community, and completely inappropriate for another. Keep these considerations in mind when you are assessing a service seeker's needs and considering next steps.

# The Scope of Your Settlement Work: When Should You Refer?

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Sometimes service seekers will need services that are outside your knowledge, expertise, or scope of practice as a settlement worker. Some examples:

- Therapeutic counselling for mental health issues
- Legal advice
- Help resolving disputes with government agencies such as Revenue Canada

If a service seeker ever asks you for help with such issues, you should refer them to a provider who is trained and qualified, such as a registered immigration consultant, a legal clinic, a paralegal, a mental health practitioner, or an accountant.

Findhelp Information Services, available by dialing 211 or visiting [211ontario.ca](http://211ontario.ca)<sup>9</sup>, can assist with information and referrals in your area.

## Strict Limits

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There are strict limits established in Section 91 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act on who may “represent or advise” a person in interactions with IRCC. These interactions include advising people about which immigration forms to file and what information to provide, and communicating with IRCC on someone else’s behalf (except for translation).

Only licensed Canadian lawyers, immigration consultants, and paralegals may engage in these activities. Anyone else who does so may face steep fines and even a prison sentence.

You as a settlement worker can provide general information about these topics, and help service seekers fill out forms, but you must refer anyone who needs any kind of immigration advice to a licensed professional, regardless of how simple the question may be.

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9 [goo.gl/CGE2EX](http://goo.gl/CGE2EX)

# Maintaining Ethical Boundaries

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In any human relationship there are boundaries – the invisible lines between people that determine how far we are willing to go when we interact with each other. Boundaries govern whether we are willing to lend people money, hug them or shake their hands, listen to them with an open mind, and manage our own reactions to their emotions. Conflict arises when boundaries are crossed.

Ethical boundaries are crucial in professional relationships. Settlement work can present some difficult dilemmas about where to set them.

1. Self-disclosure: sharing your own experiences
2. Relationships with service seekers outside the professional context
3. Giving and receiving gifts
4. Physical contact

# Cultural Differences and Ethical Boundaries

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Cultural differences can complicate dilemmas about boundaries. For instance, a service seeker may come from a culture where physical contact such as hugging is common, but the worker may come from one where hugging is highly inappropriate. It is critical that workers be mindful of differences in power in thinking through such dilemmas.

In Canada, it is generally expected that people who work in the human services should keep their personal and professional lives as separate as possible. However, in smaller communities, particularly those in rural areas where everyone knows everyone else, this can be nearly impossible. Even if you live and work in a large, anonymous city, there is still a chance you may run into a service seeker you have worked with when you are out at the supermarket or the library.

## How can you develop appropriate boundaries?

There are many ways that you can develop and enforce appropriate boundaries. These include reflecting critically on your practice and your own core values, reviewing the ethical guidelines mentioned in this chapter, talking openly with service seekers about the kind of support you can and cannot provide, seeking supervision and debriefing from your managers and peers, and practicing self-care (discussed later in this chapter).

Clear boundaries help you manage your own stress and the expectations of the people you serve. It is important for you to understand where yours are.

## People Who Refuse Service from You

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Settlement workers are expected to work with anyone who requires their services, regardless of the service seeker's race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, country or region of origin, ability, ancestry, family or marital status, or age. However, you may encounter service seekers who resist working with you because of one or more of these grounds. For instance, some men may hold religious beliefs that prohibit them from interacting with women who are not members of their families.

In cases like this, your priority should be to make sure that the service seeker gets the service that they need, even if you are not the one to provide it. Your agency may have policies for addressing such situations; check with your supervisor or program coordinator if you need guidance.

## § Section 5

# Advocacy

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## Advocating for Individuals

Service seekers who are new to Canada and Ontario may be unfamiliar with laws and regulations about housing, employment, and other aspects of daily life. As part of your work, you may be called on to advocate for the people you serve, about these and other issues. These are some examples of situations when you might need to do this:

- Writing a letter to a landlord about problems with the ventilation system in the building
- Accompanying a service seeker who has experienced domestic violence to the police station to help her file a statement
- Calling a school to insist that a child be enrolled because she has a legal right to education in Canada
- Contacting health care providers or pharmaceutical companies to secure home glucose monitoring equipment for a diabetic refugee claimant

As with all advocacy, you are more likely to be successful if you are able to clearly define the problem, identify the target audience that is most able to address it, and advocate for a realistic solution.

## Advocating on Broader Issues

Immigrants and refugees are an important part of the future of Canada, and the work to support them as they adapt and integrate is crucial. As we have seen, however, there are structural issues that can make settlement more difficult, and that can stand in the way of settlement work. Many of these relate to laws and policies.

Most agencies do not have enough time or money to engage in targeted advocacy. There is also fear that advocacy against government policies may result in funding cuts or audits by the Canada Revenue Agency. However, a 2017 expert panel report prepared for the

Federal government recognized that it is important for charities to participate in shaping public policy. What this looks like for individual agencies is still unclear. It is important to discuss how – or whether – your agency chooses to engage in policy advocacy, and continue to ask questions about what the outcomes of that advocacy might be.

## Advocating as an Individual

1. Stay informed. [The Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#)<sup>10</sup> main page has links to news about the sector, as does the privately run [Canada Immigration Newsletter](#)<sup>11</sup>. The [Toronto Star](#)<sup>12</sup> also reports extensively on immigration issues.
2. Participate in campaigns about immigration issues on social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.
3. Engage with service seekers so that they can develop their own skills for advocacy.
4. Connect with OCASI and other agencies and groups serving immigrants and refugees to learn about policy initiatives.
5. Contact your MP and MPP as a private citizen about immigration policies and issues. (Note that agencies can also contact MPs and MPPs as long as they are not campaigning for any party or specific candidate.)

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10 [goo.gl/NgCEEg](http://goo.gl/NgCEEg)

11 [goo.gl/ovFypK](http://goo.gl/ovFypK)

12 [goo.gl/TH6ZNK](http://goo.gl/TH6ZNK)

Structural barrier or issue	Examples	Advocacy efforts	Results
<p>“Excessive demand” clause in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows IRCC to refuse permanent residency to someone whose medical and social care is projected to cost more than that of the average Canadian</li> <li>• Has been to exclude entire families when one dependent child has a disability such as Down Syndrome or Deafness</li> <li>• Constitutes discrimination based on disability, and directly contravenes the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which Canada is a signatory</li> </ul>	<p>Jazmine Talosig – Deaf teenager from the Philippines whose mother entered Canada under the Live-In Caregiver Program but was initially denied permanent residency because of Jazmine’s disability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">News coverage</a><sup>A</sup></li> <li>• Petition drive</li> <li>• Campaign on social media</li> <li>• Offer of pro bono legal representation</li> <li>• Advocacy from the Burnaby Public School Board and the British Columbia Provincial School for the Deaf</li> <li>• Direct intervention by the Minister of Education in British Columbia</li> </ul>	<p>Reversal of CIC’s decision and eventual PR status for Jazmine and her mother</p> <p>Note: The Talosigs’ victory came about because it was established that Jazmine’s disability would not result in higher costs to taxpayers, not because of concerns about human rights.</p> <p>There have been other very high-profile cases of families denied admission because of a dependent child’s disability, such as the <a href="#">Montoya family from Costa Rica</a><sup>B</sup> and the <a href="#">Warkentin family from the United States</a><sup>C</sup>. Both of these families are wealthy and white, and both have received a great deal of media attention and community support. However, many racialized people, particularly Filipina women employed as live-in caregivers such as Karen Talosig and <a href="#">Mercedes Benitez</a><sup>D</sup>, have found themselves in similar situations but without the outpouring of assistance from the general public.</p>

A [goo.gl/WXXGU9](http://goo.gl/WXXGU9)

B [goo.gl/jbWVt8](http://goo.gl/jbWVt8)

C [goo.gl/Udm5eZ](http://goo.gl/Udm5eZ)

D [goo.gl/GqgFTS](http://goo.gl/GqgFTS)



Structural barrier or issue	Examples	Advocacy efforts	Results
Policies revoking work visas of temporary foreign workers after injury	Maria Victoria Venancio, temporary foreign worker from the Philippines, worked at a fast food outlet in Edmonton. She was hit by a vehicle in 2011 and paralyzed from the chest down. Her work visa was not renewed, meaning she lost her health coverage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.justice4vicky.org">www.justice4vicky.org</a> website</li> <li>• <a href="#">News coverage</a> <sup>E</sup></li> <li>• Facebook campaign</li> <li>• Support from the president of the Alberta Medical Association</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Direct intervention from by the federal and provincial governments to get her another two-year work permit and restore her health coverage</a> <sup>F</sup>
IRPA 117(9)(d) provision that any family member not listed on a person's application for permanent status in Canada cannot ever be considered a family member for the purposes of family sponsorship or reunification at a later date	Daksh Sood was born in India after his parents had applied for permanent residence in Canada. A consultant told them to leave him in India when they came to Canada, and sponsor him after they had arrived, but Section 117(9)(d) prevented them from doing so and led to a three-year separation for the parents and child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">News coverage</a> <sup>G</sup></li> <li>• Petition signed by nearly 12,000 people</li> <li>• <a href="#">Chance encounter in Ottawa with the Minister of Immigration</a> <sup>H</sup></li> </ul>	Direct intervention from the Minister of Immigration to issue a temporary resident permit and open the door to permanent residence for the boy

E [goo.gl/ZN8E5N](http://goo.gl/ZN8E5N)F [goo.gl/b1uLd1](http://goo.gl/b1uLd1)G [goo.gl/LjXYJT](http://goo.gl/LjXYJT)H [goo.gl/ydPEvH](http://goo.gl/ydPEvH)

Structural barrier or issue	Examples	Advocacy efforts	Results
Discrimination against racialized immigrants and refugees in hiring practices	Job postings requiring “Canadian experience”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News coverage</li> <li>• “<a href="#">Beyond Canadian Experience Project</a>,”<sup>I</sup> a collaboration among four organizations to examine and bring awareness to the issue in the context of human rights. Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto, Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter, Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC), Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work at the University of Toronto</li> </ul>	Ontario Human Rights Commission’s establishment of a <a href="#">policy on removing the “Canadian experience” barrier</a> <sup>J</sup> and a <a href="#">guide for employers and regulatory bodies</a> <sup>K</sup> about how to work within the Ontario Human Rights Code in this context
Indefinite detention of “irregular” migrants and people whose refugee claims have been denied	Ricardo Scotland, refugee claimant from Barbados and single parent, held in maximum-security jail for 18 months without charge or conviction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">News coverage</a><sup>L</sup> Advocacy from the <a href="#">End Immigration Detention Network</a><sup>M</sup></li> </ul>	<a href="#">Justice Edward Morgan freed Scotland without conditions in August of 2017</a> <sup>N</sup> .

I [goo.gl/uV9MYb](http://goo.gl/uV9MYb)J [goo.gl/Zf1Uwq](http://goo.gl/Zf1Uwq)K [goo.gl/DdS3nx](http://goo.gl/DdS3nx)L [goo.gl/XvxQ7X](http://goo.gl/XvxQ7X)M [goo.gl/Jkej7](http://goo.gl/Jkej7)N [goo.gl/9kMnhQ](http://goo.gl/9kMnhQ)

Structural barrier or issue	Examples	Advocacy efforts	Results
	Alpha Anawa, a Canadian citizen, was born in an immigration detention facility and lived most of the first three years of his life there because his mother, Glory Ochigbo, was detained as soon as she entered Canada as a refugee claimant from Cameroon. She had confusing paperwork and eventually withdrew her application, but was not released until she could be deported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">News coverage</a> <sup>o</sup></li> <li>• Litigation from Toronto-based legal clinic Justice for Children and Youth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification that dependent children of detainees should be a factor in considerations by the Immigration and Refugee Board</li> </ul>

## § Section 6

# Self-Care

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Work in the human services is often emotional and difficult, especially when there is a conflict between the demands you face and the amount of control you have to address them. The resulting stress can lead to physical, emotional, psychological, behavioural, interpersonal, and even spiritual harm, including burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary (or vicarious) trauma. All of these can have major impacts on you, both personally and professionally.

<sup>o</sup> [goo.gl/DJ1QiJ](https://goo.gl/DJ1QiJ)

It is critical that you look after yourself.

- Be aware of warning signs, such as sleep problems, headaches and stomachaches, exhaustion, apathy and low mood, and feelings of hopelessness or helplessness
- Reflect on your needs, emotions, and limitations without judging them
- Balance work, play, and rest
- Maintain social connections
- Build and keep a sense of purpose or meaning. For some, this involves spiritual practices such as meditation or prayer
- Express yourself in creative ways such as art or music
- Have buffers between work and home
- Set limits at work
- Ask for help when you need it, including professional development, structured peer support, supervision and debriefing, and therapeutic counselling
- Advocate for policies within your workplace that limit caseloads, recognize and address burnout and vicarious trauma, and recognize and honour staff work regularly

## Do you need support?

The [Professional Quality of Life Scale](#)<sup>13</sup> is a questionnaire available in more than 20 languages that you can use to assess your own state of mind and satisfaction with your work, and identify whether you need support. [Ontario's Mental Health Helpline and its associated website](#)<sup>14</sup> also offer assessment tools and information about mental health services.

As the flight attendants always say, "Put on your own oxygen mask first." To be able to offer appropriate support to others, you must take care of yourself.

## Wrap-Up

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This chapter has looked at what settlement means, and what settlement work is. We have also looked at who does settlement work, what skills and attributes the work

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13 [goo.gl/H3J3K7](http://goo.gl/H3J3K7)

14 [goo.gl/VWJH5p](http://goo.gl/VWJH5p)

requires, and whether the profession should be formalized and regulated. Finally, we have considered how to set ethical boundaries with the people you support, engage in advocacy, and take care of yourself. In the next two chapters, we will discuss common barriers to successful settlement that many immigrants and refugees face, and some of the resources that exist to help you support the people who seek your services.

## Sources and Further Reading

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### Settlement Work and Cultural Considerations

- [“Cultural Humility: People, Principles, and Practices”](#)<sup>15</sup> (30-minute video)

### The Scope of Your Settlement Work: When Should You Refer?

- Community Legal Education Ontario’s [Steps to Justice website](#)<sup>16</sup>
- Settlement.org, [“Where can I get help with my mental health?”](#)<sup>17</sup>
- [211Ontario.ca](#)<sup>18</sup>
- Settlementatwork.org, [Information, Orientation, and Needs Assessment](#)<sup>19</sup>

### Maintaining Ethical Boundaries

- Source: PowerPoint presentation by Lynda Monk, [Creating and Maintaining Ethical Boundaries in Client Relationships](#)<sup>20</sup>, for AMSSA

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15 [goo.gl/w779pD](https://goo.gl/w779pD)

16 [goo.gl/icP3kL](https://goo.gl/icP3kL)

17 [goo.gl/DEM4wP](https://goo.gl/DEM4wP)

18 [goo.gl/yQoRxF](https://goo.gl/yQoRxF)

19 [goo.gl/o4byFq](https://goo.gl/o4byFq)

20 [goo.gl/7hQevA](https://goo.gl/7hQevA)

## Advocating for Individuals

- [Residential Tenancies Act, 2006](#)<sup>21</sup>
- [Caring for Kids New to Canada: Advocacy for Immigrant and Refugee Health Needs](#)<sup>22</sup>

## Self-Care

- [Professional Quality of Life Elements Theory and Measurement](#)<sup>23</sup>
- [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety: Stress](#)<sup>24</sup>
- Source: Workshop on vicarious trauma and self-care offered at the 2017 OCASI Professional Development Conference by Mbalu Lumor of the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture

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21 [goo.gl/rMRMzz](http://goo.gl/rMRMzz)

22 [goo.gl/zDxuoG](http://goo.gl/zDxuoG)

23 [goo.gl/tbkPyg](http://goo.gl/tbkPyg)

24 [goo.gl/qz1xyp](http://goo.gl/qz1xyp)

## CHAPTER 8

# Working through Structural Barriers to Settlement



## Learning Outcomes

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Upon completion of Chapter 8, you will be able to:

- Understand many of the common structural issues that immigrants and refugees face as they settle in Ontario
- Discuss how different barriers intersect with each other
- Provide effective support and accurate, up-to-date information and resources to help newcomers address these issues and barriers, and settle effectively in their new communities

# From Policy to Practice

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In this guide, we have covered a lot of ground. In Part 1, we looked at the history of immigration to Canada and the policies and laws that affect it, the ways that settlement services for newcomers are funded and delivered, and the government programs that regulate the immigration and refugee systems. This course has explored critical frameworks for settlement work, the immigrant and refugee-serving sector itself, funding and delivery of settlement services, and what settlement work is.

Now it is time to talk more specifically about how all this affects the day-to-day experiences of the people you support. What are the most common barriers and challenges to successful settlement for the immigrants and refugees who seek your services? How can you help people get past them?

## Common Barriers and Challenges

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This chapter and the next one explore a variety of barriers and challenges that newcomers may face, and the supports that are available to help. This chapter discusses structural barriers. These are the obstacles created by the policies of governments and other institutions. The next one covers other common personal and social challenges for newcomers, such as culture shock, social isolation, and changing family relationships.

Keep in mind as you make your way through the chapter:

- Some newcomers may encounter many of these issues, while others may deal with very few
- Refugees and refugee claimants are more likely to experience certain barriers than economic and family class immigrants
- These barriers are frequently related, and combinations of barriers can compound the effects of each one



# How Common Barriers Intersect to Create Critical Issues

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The following is a list of common barriers and challenges for newcomers that are discussed in this chapter and the next one.

- Language
- Disability and accessibility
- Health and access to health care
- Trauma
- Gender-based violence and family violence
- Poverty
- Money management
- Unemployment or precarious work
- Housing
- Separation and reunification
- Family issues
- Social isolation
- Institutional discrimination and systemic racism
- Culture shock and resistance to the new culture
- Gender roles and lack of childcare

Here are some examples of how these barriers can intersect:

1. Poor employment conditions can lead to poverty and living in poor quality housing, which can contribute to poor physical and mental health.



1. Unemployment



2. Poverty



3. Poor housing



4. Poor physical and mental health

2. Trauma can cause disability, which can make it difficult to attend language training programs in inaccessible spaces. Not knowing English can contribute to social isolation, unemployment, and poverty.



1. Trauma



2. Disability & accessibility



3. Language:



4. Poverty



5. Social isolation



6. Unemployment

3. Not knowing how to communicate can lead to culture shock, which can have a significant effect on mental health. This can contribute to social isolation due to discrimination based on mental health stigma.



1. Language



2. Culture shock & resistance to the new culture



3. Health & access to health care



4. Institutional discrimination and systemic racism

# Language and Communication

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## Barriers

*Everyone told me “I can’t understand you”*

As you may know from personal experience, not being able to communicate, especially in a new and unfamiliar setting, is extremely frustrating. Many

refugees need help with translation and interpretation to meet their basic needs such as shelter, food, and transportation. They also need language classes in accessible areas. Some need evening classes or childcare so that they can attend.

## Supports

*English classes are helping me communicate*

As a settlement worker, you can help connect them with interpretation and translation services, and with opportunities for language

training. Convention refugees and protected persons are eligible for LINC classes, while refugee claimants may be eligible for other language training programs funded by the province, or the local municipality or school board.

- [Settlement.org: English as a Second Language \(ESL\)](https://www.settlement.org/english-as-a-second-language-esl/)<sup>1</sup>

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1 [goo.gl/zp5AxR](https://www.settlement.org/english-as-a-second-language-esl/)

# Poverty

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## Barriers

Many newcomers, especially refugees and refugee claimants, live in poverty. A lot of factors can contribute to this:

- Unemployment or precarious employment
- Racism and discrimination in hiring and in housing
- Not enough money from social assistance
- High costs for housing and food

Within thirty days of arrival, government-sponsored refugees must start paying back loans they received through the [Immigration Loans Program](#)<sup>2</sup> for transportation to Canada and mandatory medical examinations. Funds may be available from the [Resettlement Assistance Program](#)<sup>3</sup> in some cases to help with these repayments, but only at the discretion of a visa officer. The [Canadian Council for Refugees](#)<sup>4</sup> has found that many refugees cut back on basic necessities like food and housing costs, delay education and language classes, and do not take full advantage of available settlement services, in order to repay these loans.

Convention refugees and protected persons can get support in their first year from the Refugee Assistance Plan, which offers a one-time amount for setting up a household, as well as monthly support. After the end of the first year, though, sponsored refugees are on their own, and it can be extremely difficult for them to find stable jobs that pay a living wage.

## Supports

Settlement workers can help newcomers address poverty in many ways. These are only a few:

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<sup>2</sup> [goo.gl/EvnCpn](http://goo.gl/EvnCpn)

<sup>3</sup> [goo.gl/pKe8y3](http://goo.gl/pKe8y3)

<sup>4</sup> [goo.gl/X6sZ71](http://goo.gl/X6sZ71)



*I can feed my family or pay the rent, but not both*



*The money from the government for our kids every month helps a bit*



- Helping people apply for government programs such as the [Child Tax Benefit](#)<sup>5</sup>, employment insurance, and the [Basic Income Pilot Program](#)<sup>6</sup> in areas where it is available
- Providing employment programs to help people find work
- Advocating for programs that fight poverty, including affordable childcare and basic income supports



## Unemployment or Precarious Work

*I have a degree and years of work experience in my country, but the only jobs people will consider me for don't use my skills and don't pay enough to cover my expenses.*

Newcomers who can work generally want to get a good job as soon as possible, but they face numerous obstacles: a labour market full of temporary, part-time, low-wage jobs without benefits, a lack of connections and professional networks, hiring bias from employers, trouble getting foreign credentials recognized, and unfamiliarity with “soft skills.” They

may also have the additional challenges of residual trauma, lack of formal education, gaps in their work history, not knowing English or French, not being able to provide references, or not having copies of their degrees or qualifications if they do have formal education. If they do manage to find jobs, they are unlikely to be familiar with precautions for occupational health and safety, or with their rights as employees.

Refugee claimants have the extra burden of having to wait to apply for a work permit allowing them to do legitimate jobs until their claims have been referred to the Refugee Protection Division (RPD) of the Immigration and Refugee Board. If they are approved for a work permit, they can then apply for a Social Insurance Number

5 [goo.gl/WmH1y9](https://goo.gl/WmH1y9)

6 [goo.gl/AJ8P8L](https://goo.gl/AJ8P8L)

(SIN) from Service Canada, and start looking for work after they receive one. However, SINS for refugee claimants (and for all temporary residents of Canada who are authorized to work here) begin with the number 9. Some employers may refuse to hire people with temporary status. Claimants who are from one of the Designated Countries of Origin cannot get a work permit at all unless their claim has been approved, or they have been waiting at least 180 days without a response from the RPD.

## Supports



*Can someone help me let employers know about my abilities and how hard I am willing to work?*

Settlement workers can support newcomers' efforts to find work in many ways:

- Connecting them to language training programs and employment programs
- Providing information about Canadian culture and expectations about “soft skills”
- Sharing information about [employment standards](#)<sup>7</sup>, [worker rights](#)<sup>8</sup>, and [workplace health and safety](#)<sup>9</sup>
- Increasing public awareness of newcomers' abilities, and the benefits that can come from hiring them
- Working with Employment Ontario Employment Services providers
- Learning about the OHRC's [Policy](#)<sup>10</sup> and [eLearning](#)<sup>11</sup> on removing the “Canadian Experience” barrier
- Reaching out to the networks of private sponsors and volunteers to find supportive employers
- Helping refugee claimants apply for work permits if they need them. Online applications are processed more quickly than applications

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7 [goo.gl/vtM1CU](http://goo.gl/vtM1CU)

8 [goo.gl/5UQ4as](http://goo.gl/5UQ4as)

9 [goo.gl/RwcGU2](http://goo.gl/RwcGU2)

10 [goo.gl/Etz9be](http://goo.gl/Etz9be)

11 [goo.gl/hr3u7p](http://goo.gl/hr3u7p)

sent by mail. It is very important to let refugee claimants know that they should not risk working without a permit, because if they are caught, they risk deportation.



# Housing

## Barriers

*I can't find a place for my family to live. As soon as a landlord sees my name and hears my accent they don't even want to see my rental application.*

Newcomers often have a very hard time finding adequate housing. In major metropolitan areas, particularly Toronto, the vacancy rate for rental properties is very low, and rents are very high, especially for places near transit and jobs. Many people new to Canada have to live in overcrowded, unsafe conditions, in poorly maintained homes that may

be contaminated by mould or bedbugs. Rent may be so expensive that people with low incomes cannot afford other basic necessities like food and clothing.

Many newcomers also experience discrimination from landlords based on one or a combination of the grounds of gender, race, creed, citizenship, family status, or being in receipt of public assistance, even though these are all prohibited grounds under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)<sup>12</sup>. Landlords may also be unwilling to rent to large families, or to people without references or an established credit history.

## Supports

*Can someone help me to communicate to landlords that we are good people and will be responsible tenants?*

Homelessness is often hidden, because people stay with friends or relatives, or in non-residential buildings. Some newcomers are forced to live in shelters because they cannot find or afford a suitable home.

12 [goo.gl/cbbvHg](http://goo.gl/cbbvHg)

Settlement workers can take the following actions to help support newcomers with matters of housing:

- Help people look for housing
- Provide access to listings of available rental units
- Inform yourself about tenant rights and responsibilities through the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s eLearning series, [Human Rights and Rental Housing](#)<sup>13</sup>
- Encourage them to watch the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s video [Housing is a Human Right](#)<sup>14</sup>
- Connect them with financial help such as local rent banks and the [Low-Income Energy Assistance Program \(LEAP\)](#)<sup>15</sup>
- Support them with translation and interpretation
- Advocate on their behalf with landlords
- Connect them with legal clinics if necessary

In urban areas, housing help centres can provide many of these services. However, in smaller regions, if such centres even exist, their main priority may be helping people fight evictions, so basic housing support falls to immigrant and refugee-serving agencies.

## Case study: The Khatebs and the Abdullahs

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Two refugee families from Syria are being sponsored privately in your community. One, the Khateb family, is being sponsored by a community organization that owns a house and is letting them stay there rent-free. The other, the Abdullah family, is being sponsored by a Group of Five, which has been providing them with money to rent a different house. The Khatebs are upset that they are not receiving the same amount of money as the Abdullahs, and they feel that they are being treated unfairly.




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13 [goo.gl/BbJbxT](http://goo.gl/BbJbxT)

14 [goo.gl/cYpeKf](http://goo.gl/cYpeKf)

15 [goo.gl/sGqL7M](http://goo.gl/sGqL7M)



# Reflection: The Khatebs and the Abdullaahs

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How can you support the refugee families and the sponsors?

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## Health and Access to the Health Care System

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### Barriers

*I thought I would be healthy in Canada, but I feel worse. I think I need to see a doctor, but I don't know how.*

Immigrants are generally healthier than average Canadians when they arrive, but their health tends to decline the longer they are here. Refugees to Canada have reported having more problems with their physical, mental, and emotional health than other immigrants.

Newcomers may have trouble connecting with the health care system for many reasons:

- Language barriers
- Low income – no time to take off work
- Lack of transportation
- Cultural or religious reasons
- Lack of health literacy and familiarity with the health care system
- Long waiting times
- Doctors not accepting new patients

Health coverage may also be an issue. Permanent residents must wait three months after establishing residency in Canada until they can get OHIP. Convention refugees and protected persons are eligible for OHIP coverage as soon as they arrive in Ontario, but refugee claimants cannot apply for OHIP until their claims are approved.

Until then, they receive limited coverage under the [Interim Federal Health Program](#)<sup>16</sup>. Some Convention refugees and protected persons may also be eligible for this program in addition to their OHIP coverage. IRCC provides [information about eligibility for the IFHP](#)<sup>17</sup>.

IFHP coverage for refugee claimants was cut in 2012, but restored by a Federal Court decision in 2014. Still, [many providers find it complicated and confusing](#)<sup>18</sup> to apply to be part of the program, and to determine exactly what it covers.

## Supports

You can help newcomers by providing information about the health care that is available to them, referring them to medical professionals, finding out about providers who serve specific cultural communities, and arranging for translation or interpretation if necessary. Ontario provides a service called [Health Care Connect](#)<sup>19</sup> to help people find a family doctor or nurse practitioner.



*I finally found a doctor who is taking new patients*

<sup>16</sup> [goo.gl/CofRPC](http://goo.gl/CofRPC)

<sup>17</sup> [goo.gl/UbDscn](http://goo.gl/UbDscn)

<sup>18</sup> [goo.gl/95a1qR](http://goo.gl/95a1qR)

<sup>19</sup> [goo.gl/LkrV3p](http://goo.gl/LkrV3p)

For those who do not have coverage, remember that Community Health Centres provide care to everyone regardless of immigration status, and your area may have other options available for people without OHIP or IFHP, such as doctors who accept payment for services, or clinics that specialize in care for those without insurance.

As a settlement worker, you may find these webinars, facilitated by Crossroads Clinic at Women’s College Hospital and funded by IRCC, to be informative and helpful. You must register for the webinars before you can see the content.

- [Navigating the Ontario Healthcare System Part I](#)<sup>20</sup>
- [Navigating the Ontario Healthcare System Part II](#)<sup>21</sup>



## Institutional Discrimination and Systemic Racism

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*People make all kinds of assumptions about me just because of where I come from. It feels like everyone is afraid of me. I'm afraid that I am going to get in trouble but I haven't done anything wrong.*

Many refugees and other newcomers face discrimination such as racism, sexism, or xenophobia. It can be obvious, like when a landlord says an apartment is already rented but then shows it to someone else, or subtle, like when a co-worker says “You’re not like those other people from your country.” Often, it comes from anti-Black racism or Islamophobia.

Many people think of discrimination and racism as interpersonal, but they are also deeply rooted in Canada’s institutions and systems. Here are some examples of institutional racism in Ontario:

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20 [goo.gl/CA1Lb5](http://goo.gl/CA1Lb5)

21 [goo.gl/euiqyT](http://goo.gl/euiqyT)

- The overrepresentation of Black and Indigenous people in the criminal justice system<sup>22</sup> and the child welfare system<sup>23</sup>
- Routine stops by police to collect and record people’s personal information -- this practice, called carding<sup>24</sup>, has been used very disproportionately against Black and Brown people
  - Discriminatory treatment in schools:
    - “Streaming<sup>25</sup>” high numbers of racialized children, especially Black and Indigenous ones, into non-academic educational paths, thus limiting their future opportunities and earning potential
    - Higher rates of punishments and expulsions for Black and Indigenous students<sup>26</sup> in public schools than for students of other backgrounds
- Under-representation<sup>27</sup> and biased representation<sup>28</sup> of racialized people in the media
- Examples of systemic Islamophobia<sup>29</sup>:
  - Employment discrimination against people with Muslim names
  - Surveillance and security profiling of Muslims and mosques by the government
  - Sharp increase in reported hate crimes against Muslims since 2013

## Supports

Discrimination and racism can have major impact on the quality of newcomers’ lives. The governments of Canada and Ontario have recognized the negative effects and are starting to address them directly, but there is much more work to be done.



*I work hard, and am respectful to everyone I meet. I don't cause any trouble. What more can I do?*

Here are some ways that settlement workers and immigrant and refugee-serving agencies can support newcomers experiencing these issues.

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22 [goo.gl/kTZRTi](http://goo.gl/kTZRTi)

23 [goo.gl/ncKJHA](http://goo.gl/ncKJHA)

24 [goo.gl/9VjcxV](http://goo.gl/9VjcxV)

25 [goo.gl/DxsZcc](http://goo.gl/DxsZcc)

26 [goo.gl/YiccmC](http://goo.gl/YiccmC)

27 [goo.gl/iCkG4g](http://goo.gl/iCkG4g)

28 [goo.gl/EQYdpv](http://goo.gl/EQYdpv)

29 [goo.gl/2DRWdb](http://goo.gl/2DRWdb)

- Reflecting on your own values and unconscious bias, as described in Chapter 1 of this training
- Providing information and advocacy about school streaming
- Acknowledging the existence and effects of institutional racism, and advocating for efforts to eradicate it
- Learning about and supporting the work of the [Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate](#)<sup>30</sup> and its three-year strategy, and of the Ontario Human Rights Commission
- Connecting survivors of Islamophobic violence with the [Rivers of Hope toolkit](#)<sup>31</sup> of resources, support, and community



# Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia

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## Barriers

*I don't want to leave a part of myself at the door. I've always had to hide and I don't know if it's safe to come out.*

LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, etc.) newcomers are an integral, though often invisible, part of immigrant, refugee, and LGBTQ+ communities. Experiencing marginalization from within both cultural communities and mainstream LGBTQ+ communities often leaves individuals feeling that there are few good options for obtaining services.

LGBTQ+ newcomers, especially trans and nonbinary people, are also at far greater risk of being discriminated against in hiring practices, and receiving inadequate health care.

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30 [goo.gl/muPuHM](http://goo.gl/muPuHM)

31 [goo.gl/okYXPj](http://goo.gl/okYXPj)

## Supports

There are many ways for settlement workers to support LGBTQ+ refugees.

- Familiarize yourself with the resources available on the web page for OCASI's Positive Spaces Initiative.
- Make the physical environment welcoming -- put up OCASI Positive Spaces posters and make Positive Spaces postcards available to service seekers. These are available in a variety of languages.
- Take advantage of OCASI's Positive Spaces training, offered in person without cost to immigrant and refugee-serving agencies.
- Make sure that intake forms and any other forms produced by your agency contain options for indicating genders other than male and female, such as non-binary, and for indicating domestic partnerships such as common-law marriage. Ideally, people should be able to indicate their gender themselves, not have to choose from a list of options. There should also be space for people to indicate their pronouns.
- Listen supportively to LGBTQ+ service seekers, without judgement.



*The settlement agency had forms where I could enter my own gender instead of choosing from only two. It seems like a small thing but it's huge to me.*

## Disability and Accessibility

### Barriers

Disability can affect anyone, and it can be especially challenging for immigrant and refugee families. Common types of disability include blindness or low vision, deafness or hearing loss, conditions that make mobility devices necessary, chronic pain, intellectual or cognitive disabilities, and mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder.



*It is not easy because I stay home*



Disability is more likely to affect refugees and refugee claimants than economic and family class immigrants. Many refugees have become disabled by injury or trauma, while IRCC's immigration programs have generally screened out people with disabilities. Conceptions of disabilities vary widely across cultures. Some newcomers may be familiar with people who have disabilities, while others are surprised people with disabilities out in public. Disability is so stigmatized in some communities that family members may believe they need to hide a child who has a disability out of concern that they will not be able to find spouses for that child's siblings.

## Supports



*I learned how to use transit to get to work*

Many families do not know that support exists, let alone how to access it. The ARCH Disability Law Centre provides a [list of disability organizations](#)<sup>32</sup> in Ontario, but most of these are not geared toward immigrants or refugees. OCASI's

Accessibility Initiative offers an [Accessibility Kit](#)<sup>33</sup> with information, stories, and recommendations of what settlement workers can do to support newcomer families living with disability.



## Gender Roles and Lack of Childcare

### Barriers

*Back home I took care of the kids, but here I have to go to work, and my husband hates it.*

In Canada, nearly three-quarters of women with children under 16 work outside the home. In many cultures, though, women are expected to take care of the house, the children, and the elders, but many families cannot make ends meet on a single income.

[goo.gl/TqMjZn](http://goo.gl/TqMjZn)  
[goo.gl/NFXtQx](http://goo.gl/NFXtQx)

Also, the need for caregiving does not disappear when women go to work. This means that the lack of affordable, accessible daycare or eldercare can be a serious problem, especially for lone parents. In addition, the adjustment to new gender roles can also be very hard for families, especially men, from strongly patriarchal cultures. Many men who have always been the breadwinners and the final authorities in their families become discouraged and resentful about their own lives when they see their wives becoming more independent. Such men often withdraw into their own cultural communities, socializing only with other men there. Some do not seek work for themselves. They may lash out, becoming emotionally or physically abusive.

## Supports

Settlement workers and immigrant and refugee-serving agencies can support families struggling with these issues in several ways. The Government of Ontario provides a [search tool for finding licenced daycare programs](#)<sup>34</sup> across the province.

Being familiar with the local daycare system can also help you connect families with available spaces.

You can also support community efforts to establish groups that can share responsibilities for caregiving, and offer support groups and community spaces for men who are having trouble coping with their new roles.



*My daughter is too young to stay home alone when I'm at work, so I have to find a safe place for her to be.*

## Case study: Kadiye

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Kadiye is two years old, born in Canada to parents who fled Somalia when his mother was pregnant. He has been diagnosed with autism. His parents blame themselves for his diagnosis, pointing out the high rates of autism in Somali communities in Europe and North America. The family lives in Windsor. His father works long hours at a survival job in a warehouse and the family lives in a one-bedroom apartment. His mother would like to improve her English and find work, but she does not believe she can ever leave Kadiye's side.



# Reflection: Kadiye

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What services might the family need?

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## Immigration Status

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### Barriers

*I went to a settlement agency for housing help, but they said I need a PR card*

Many government-funded services, such as language classes and job search workshops, are available only to people with status as permanent residents. People with temporary status are not eligible for most of these services. Also, once someone becomes a citizen, they lose access to many agencies

and programs. The expectation is that if Canadian citizens need support, they can find it from “mainstream” organizations that serve the general public.

Many immigrant and refugee-serving agencies therefore struggle with how to support people who could benefit from their funded services but who are not eligible to receive them. Some ways that agencies deal with this are to charge fees for services, seek private donations, or develop “social enterprises” that generate income from products or services created by program participants.

## Supports

A **refugee claimant** – a person who has made an official claim for asylum at the border or at an inland IRCC office – is entitled to certain protections, and some services and supports. However, they are not covered by the Refugee Resettlement Assistance Program.



*My friend told me about a shelter where I can stay until my first Ontario Works cheque comes*

Services available to **all** refugee claimants:

- Basic employment protections under the Employment Standards Act
- Workplace health and safety protections and workers' compensation under the [WSIB](#)<sup>35</sup>
- Spaces in homeless shelters (if there is room available)
- Services from Community Health Centres (depending on the length of waitlists)
- Public education for all school-age children

Services available to **some** refugee claimants:

- Health coverage by the Interim Federal Health Program
- Language training offered by organizations funded by the province, municipalities, school boards, and private groups (but not the federal government)
- [Support from Legal Aid Ontario](#)<sup>36</sup> in dealing with matters of immigration
- [Social assistance from Ontario Works](#)<sup>37</sup>

Eligibility for legal aid and social assistance generally depends on income. Service seekers may need your help with finding information about these programs and applying to them.

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35 [goo.gl/uzrWga](http://goo.gl/uzrWga)

36 [goo.gl/1wHXz7](http://goo.gl/1wHXz7)

37 [goo.gl/DbnUoW](http://goo.gl/DbnUoW)

# Lack of Legal Status in Canada

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## Barriers

*I'm scared to see a doctor or look for a better job because I might get deported*

People without legal status in Canada live in constant fear that they will be caught, detained, and deported. They are also ineligible for most public services.

**Work:** They cannot work legally, and if they can find a job, they may be exploited by

employers who threaten to turn them in to authorities. They may not be aware of workplace protections available to all workers regardless of status, and feel reluctant to report workplace abuses or unsafe conditions for fear of deportation.

**Housing:** Landlords often refuse to rent to people without a credit history or stable, documented employment. People without status are not eligible to seek housing support from immigrant and refugee-serving agencies.

**Health care:** People without status are not eligible for any government-funded health insurance such as IFHP or OHIP. Very few health care providers offer services to uninsured people, and those without status may be very reluctant to seek care. Community Health Centres serve people regardless of status, but the waiting lists for many CHCs are very long. Serious injury or illness requiring hospitalization can lead to massive debt.

**Education:** People without status are not eligible for language training, job training, or classes at a college or university. However, all children under 18 are legally entitled to attend public schools in Ontario.

## Supports



*I found a doctor that doesn't ask about status*

There are a number of ways to support people without status.

- Providing information about labour law and employment standards, connecting people with the [Workers' Action Centre](#)<sup>38</sup>, and advocating with employers
- Referring them to legal clinics
- Connecting them with food banks
- Sharing information about library services
- Connecting parents of young children with [Ontario Early Years Centres](#)<sup>39</sup>, which offer free activities and programs regardless of status
- Helping parents enrol their children in school
- Referring people to local Community Health Centres and Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000), a free hotline staffed by registered nurses 24 hours a day, with translation services into several languages

## Wrap-Up

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In this chapter we have discussed common structural barriers to successful settlement for immigrants and refugees. We have also considered how these barriers can intersect with each other and with the social and interpersonal challenges discussed in the next chapter, and suggested ways for you as settlement workers to offer support.

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38 [goo.gl/tqcoqc](http://goo.gl/tqcoqc)

39 [goo.gl/2w4RuJ](http://goo.gl/2w4RuJ)

# Sources and Further Reading

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## Poverty

- Settlement.org: [I am a refugee claimant. Can I work?](#)<sup>40</sup>
- CBC News: [Unable to find work, many Syrian refugees reluctantly turn to social assistance](#)<sup>41</sup>

## Unemployment or Precarious Work

- The Globe and Mail: [One year after arrival, Syrian refugees continue to face employment barriers](#)<sup>42</sup>
- Hire Immigrants: Ontario: [Immigrant Employment Councils and Networks](#)<sup>43</sup>

## Housing

- Hiebert, Daniel. [Precarious Housing and Hidden Homelessness among Refugees Asylum Seekers and Immigrants in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver](#)<sup>44</sup>. Report prepared at the University of British Columbia, for Employment and Social Development Canada.
- Raicevic, Ana, ["Immigrants, Refugees and the Risk of Homelessness: Analyzing the Barriers to Adequate and Affordable Housing" \(2013\). Theses and dissertations. Paper 1972.](#)<sup>45</sup>
- [Roofs for Refugees](#)<sup>46</sup>

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40 [goo.gl/gdrCE6](http://goo.gl/gdrCE6)

41 [goo.gl/7rYGrD](http://goo.gl/7rYGrD)

42 [goo.gl/r2GMEv](http://goo.gl/r2GMEv)

43 [goo.gl/vk1jNm](http://goo.gl/vk1jNm)

44 [goo.gl/LHDVWp](http://goo.gl/LHDVWp)

45 [goo.gl/TiZZi1](http://goo.gl/TiZZi1)

46 [goo.gl/Zm46Xn](http://goo.gl/Zm46Xn)

## Institutional Discrimination and Systemic Racism

- Ontario Human Rights Commission: [Examples of racial discrimination \(fact sheet\)](#)<sup>47</sup>
- Azeezah Kanji, JD, LL.M., Director of Programming at the Noor Cultural Centre, [The Quebec Mosque Shooting in Context: A Resource List on Islamophobia in Canada](#)<sup>48</sup>
- Azeezah Kanji, [Islamophobia in Canada](#)<sup>49</sup>, report submitted to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage
- Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, [2018 Survey: Islamophobia in Canada, Still a Grave Problem](#)<sup>50</sup>
- Baljit Nagra and Paula Marutto, [Crossing Borders and Managing Racialized Identities: Experiences of Security and Surveillance among Young Canadian Muslims](#)<sup>51</sup>
- Legal Aid Ontario information sheet, [The Rise in Islamophobia](#)<sup>52</sup>
- New Canadian Media, [The Invisibility of Canada's Diversity](#)<sup>53</sup>
- Canadian Race Relations Foundation, [Racist Discourse in Canada's English Print Media](#)<sup>54</sup>
- The Toronto Star, [Unequal Justice: Aboriginal and Black Inmates Disproportionately Fill Ontario's Jails](#)<sup>55</sup>
- The Toronto Star: [CAS Study Reveals Stark Racial Disparities for Blacks, Aboriginals](#)<sup>56</sup>
- Canadian Civil Liberties Association, [A Recent History of Racial Profiling and Policing](#)<sup>57</sup>
- CBC News, [Black Students in Toronto Streamed into Courses below Their Ability, Report Finds](#)<sup>58</sup>
- The Toronto Star, [Toronto School Suspension Rates Highest for Black and Aboriginal Students](#)<sup>59</sup>

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47 [goo.gl/4KPJMF](http://goo.gl/4KPJMF)

48 [goo.gl/KzkLGA](http://goo.gl/KzkLGA)

49 [goo.gl/PB8CrE](http://goo.gl/PB8CrE)

50 [goo.gl/jcNHM7](http://goo.gl/jcNHM7)

51 [goo.gl/2rbghf](http://goo.gl/2rbghf)

52 [goo.gl/RdZN65](http://goo.gl/RdZN65)

53 [goo.gl/BZkqMy](http://goo.gl/BZkqMy)

54 [goo.gl/eqUaB5](http://goo.gl/eqUaB5)

55 [goo.gl/Teb1tP](http://goo.gl/Teb1tP)

56 [goo.gl/GxStFV](http://goo.gl/GxStFV)

57 [goo.gl/XpB7Ro](http://goo.gl/XpB7Ro)

58 [goo.gl/mK79KZ](http://goo.gl/mK79KZ)

59 [goo.gl/5a74hC](http://goo.gl/5a74hC)

## Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia

- Settlement.org: What services can I get as a lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or questioning (LGBTQ+) person?<sup>60</sup>

## Gender Roles and Lack of Childcare

- Vedrana Mehyk, Employment barriers of refugees in Canada: Physically in Canada but mentally back home<sup>61</sup>.

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60 [goo.gl/irbqhP](https://goo.gl/irbqhP)

61 [goo.gl/WvcDkN](https://goo.gl/WvcDkN)

## CHAPTER 9

# Social and Interpersonal Challenges and Supports



## Learning Outcomes

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Upon completion of Chapter 9, you will be able to:

- Understand many of the common social and interpersonal challenges that immigrants and refugees face as they settle in Ontario
- Provide effective support and accurate, up-to-date information and resources to help newcomers address these challenges, and settle effectively in their new communities



# Common Social and Interpersonal Challenges for Newcomers

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This last chapter explores some of the social and interpersonal challenges that newcomers may face as they settle in Ontario. Many of these can be more complicated to address than basic needs such as shelter, health care, and a stable income. Again, keep in mind as you make your way through the chapter: everyone's experience is unique, and what works to support one person may not work at all for someone else.

## Culture Shock and Resistance to the New Culture

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### Challenges

*I thought I would be able to move forward in my new life more quickly. It feels like I am getting nowhere. I'm so tired of struggling.*

Everyone's experience of arriving in a new community with a new culture is unique, but there are elements that are common to many people's process of acculturation. This process is sometimes called "culture shock," and it is described as having four stages.

These stages may overlap, and newcomers may experience one or more of them, or none at all.

- **The "honeymoon":** This stage is characterized by great happiness, excitement, and relief at arriving in the new community and being safe.
- **Frustration:** Newcomers often get to this stage when they are starting to become familiar with their new surroundings, but do not know enough about them to navigate easily.

- **Adjustment:** In this stage, the new culture and community start to feel “normal,” and most situations are becoming familiar. The newcomer knows what to expect most of the time, and generally feels less negative about the new place.
- **Adaptation:** This stage can come months or even years after arrival. Some people never reach it. Ideally, people who do reach it can participate fully in their new communities. This does not mean that they abandon their culture of origin, or that they stop speaking their first language; it just means that they are integrated enough to be comfortable taking an active role in the life of their community.

## Supports

The adjustment process is stressful, and the stress can be worsened by any number of factors, including barriers to housing, employment, and other basic needs, and racism and discrimination. Explaining the stages of culture shock can help people name what they are feeling, and supporting them in meeting their needs and navigating in their new communities can help them move through the process.



*It's so hard learning what people expect here – sometimes I even forget what language I'm supposed to speak.*

## Social Isolation

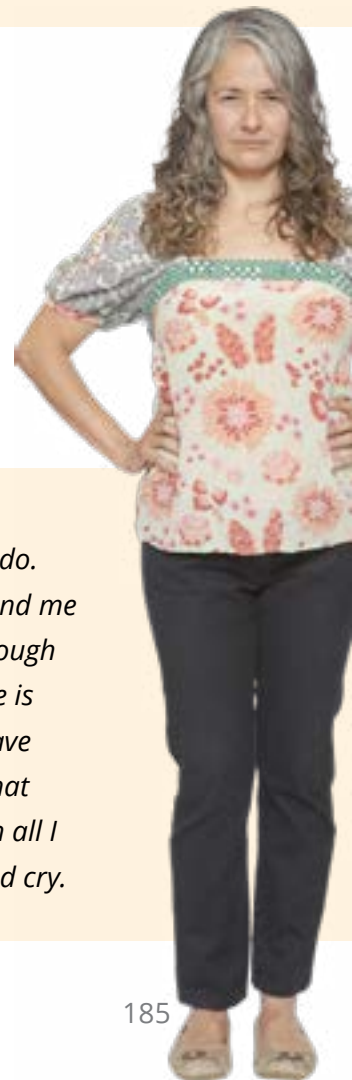
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### Challenges

The World Health Organization has identified social exclusion as a major social determinant of health. Social exclusion leads to unequal access to resources, rights, and opportunities, and prevents people from engaging fully in public life. It can occur on many levels, including individual, household, group, community, country, and global ones.



*I don't know what to do. No one can understand me or what I've been through just to get here. There is no one to talk to. I have to keep pretending that everything is ok when all I want to do is hide and cry.*



Some social exclusion comes from the experience of relocation, especially forced displacement. Newcomers are disconnected from their social support networks of family and friends back home, and it can take time for them to establish new connections in Canada. Many refugees living with the after effects of trauma and betrayal by their community and country may find it difficult to trust people in a new place. Mistrust may interfere with refugees' relationships with their sponsors, as discussed earlier. Many refugees are also experiencing overwhelming grief.

## Supports



*Is there anyone I can trust? I'm scared and I'm angry.*

Newcomers may need a great deal of support in establishing and building interpersonal relationships and connections in their new community. As a settlement worker, you can take a number of steps to help with this process.

- Highlighting examples of newcomers' strengths and resilience, and identifying protective factors such as sources of meaning and hope
- Addressing their immediate needs, such as housing and overcoming language barriers
- Taking a collaborative approach, working to decrease differences in power between the service provider and the service seeker
- Acknowledging the discrimination and racism that they may face as newcomers
- Learning about trauma-informed practice
- Connecting them with appropriate services and programs, such as trauma-informed health care for refugees



*My friends are saying the government was supposed to give us all houses when we got to Canada, but we live in a small apartment now.*

It is common for some newcomer communities to be very tightly knit, to protect themselves from social isolation. While this can be beneficial, it also means that rumours and inaccurate information can spread quickly through a community.

These rumours may be about immigration rules, levels of support for newcomers, or any other topic of significant interest. It can be very difficult to combat such rumours.

Here are some ways to help make sure the information shared in the community is accurate.

- Having a presence at community festivals and events
- Offering printed materials in a variety of languages
- Recruiting and training members of the community on various issues so that they can share information in culturally relevant ways. Some agencies and organizations have been offering programs for “peer champions,” “cultural brokers,” or “information ambassadors.”
- Contacting religious and community leaders to share information and resources

## Trauma

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### Challenge

Some of the people you support may have experienced trauma. In particular, many refugees and refugee claimants have endured truly horrific experiences. Some may have been raped or tortured, or have seen family members die in front of them. Many have lost everything -- family, social networks, livelihoods, belongings, homes.

Some can go on with their lives without lasting effects, but others cannot function without support. Trauma can have lasting effects on the brain, but proper care and treatment can help people heal.

### Supports

Many organizations are working to foster a sense of hope and resilience in people who have experienced trauma. CAMH has been training front-line settlement workers across the province,



*I can't stop seeing what happened back home*



*It helps to talk to someone who understands*



and OCASI's Mental Health Project has produced resources to support immigrant and refugee-serving agencies and front-line workers in promoting refugee mental health.

Note that some service seekers may prefer support from mainstream providers that serve the general public, while others may feel more comfortable with service providers from their own cultural community. Keep this in mind as you assess needs and make referrals.

## Case Study: Sonia

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Sonia, a 33-year-old woman fleeing her country's civil war, came to Canada as a refugee six years ago. She and her four children, aged 9 to 14 at arrival, landed in Canada first, but her husband was killed before he could join them. Six months after they arrived, the two youngest children died in an apartment fire when Sonia was out at her third-shift job and the oldest was watching them. Sonia was deeply traumatized by the deaths of her husband and children,

and has been unable to work since the fire. She receives ODSP and lives in subsidized housing near where the fire occurred. Her oldest child has left Canada; the other has moved into a very small bachelor apartment out of the neighbourhood because staying in the community reminds him too much of the tragedy. She has come to your agency seeking housing help, because she wants to move to be near her son, but she has been told that she is not eligible to move to a different subsidized apartment because she is not in any immediate danger.

## Reflection: Sonia

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How can you support Sonia?

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## Family Separation and Reunification

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### Challenges

Families who reunite in Canada often face complex and difficult issues that result from separation and reunification. Family members may adjust to the new culture at different paces. Some may feel strongly connected to the culture they came from even as others try to become more “Canadian.” Spouses who are reunited after a long time apart may find that they no longer have much in common. Youth who have been away from their parents may feel that they are still treated as children even though they have grown and changed. All of this can have affect people’s sense of well-being and mental health.



*I've been here on my own for three years. I've changed.*



A project conducted by [Toronto Public Health](#)<sup>1</sup> found that families with experiences of separation and reunification often linked vulnerability to social isolation, depression and anxiety, and emotional issues.

The difficulties that can arise from separation and reunification can take time to surface, and people may not want to talk about them, believing that family conflict or negative feelings about family life are shameful or taboo.

## Supports



*It's good to know that many families have the same struggle*

Settlement workers and agencies can help by:

- Building questions about family separation and reunification into the intake process, to assess needs
- Offering information about common issues when families are separated and then reunite
- Encouraging communication among family members
- Establishing peer support groups for families to discuss these issues
- Referring service seekers to other agencies as appropriate



## Family Issues

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### Challenges

*It feels like our family has been out of control ever since we came to Canada*

How parents raise their children can change dramatically in a new country and cultural environment. In many cultures, people are expected to obey their parents even well into adulthood, letting them make major decisions about education, professions, and marriage, but in Canada, children learn about individuality

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1 [goo.gl/9ckirb](http://goo.gl/9ckirb)



and making their own decisions. This can cause a lot of conflict, especially if parents and children are not able to listen to each other and communicate well.

These are some of the factors that can affect how immigrant parents and children interact with each other.

- How long the family has been in Canada
- Whether they have been separated and then reunited
- The developmental stage of the child or children
- The parents' age and level of maturity
- The child's gender
  - The effects of separation from the extended family, which plays a major role in childrearing in many cultures
  - How much contact the family has with other people in Canada
  - The family's economic stability
  - How much support the family receives from other sources

## Challenges for youth

For youth trying to figure out their own identities, trying to get used to a place with very different values can be especially complex and stressful.

Parents who have left a familiar environment and their friends and families to give their children a better life may place great pressure on them to do well at school, but the children may have trouble with language, new teaching styles, unfamiliar academic challenges, and difficulty making friends. Some experience bullying, which can harm their academic performance. Parents may also stress the importance of the culture of origin even as children reject it, wanting to fit in better with their peers and feel more at home in Canada.



*All we do is fight all the time. It feels like they don't respect me.*



## Challenges for parents

To raise children successfully in the Canadian context, immigrant parents must be willing to think deeply about their own values and goals for their children, and how the family's



day-to-day interactions can reinforce them. Many recognize that in a new country, they must make changes in the way they parent, and they may need support in doing so.

When you provide this kind of support, it is important to recognize the gifts and experience of immigrant parents while helping them to navigate the new cultural environment, never seeking to teach them how to be parents.

## Supports



*It's easier for me when I feel like he is at least trying to understand my point of view.*

## Supporting immigrant youth

Research has revealed that the newcomer youth who adapt to life in Canada most successfully are the ones who are encouraged to maintain a sense of their heritage and culture of origin as well as strong connections to their new society.

Settlement workers can refer to OCASI's Newcomer Youth Settlement Guide for Service Providers for ideas about supporting newcomer youth and meeting their unique needs. These are a few possible strategies:

- Creating programs that address physical and mental health for youth, promote harm reduction, and teach conflict resolution
- Ensuring that youth programs are accessible, affordable, and relevant
- Building relationships with principals, teachers, and staff in the school system
- Advocating with employers to hire newcomer youth
- Teaching newcomer youth and their families about the Canadian labour market and workplaces
- Educating youth about their legal rights

## Supporting immigrant parents

Settlement workers and immigrant and refugee-serving agencies can help in various ways:

- Establishing groups for immigrant parents that emphasize mutual support and collective learning, and creating opportunities to connect with other families facing similar issues
- Providing information about the types of issues immigrant families commonly face
- Explaining what family counselling is, and offering referrals to providers

## Case Study: Mari - Family Conflict

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Mari is sixteen years old and is from a socially conservative community. Her father has been living and working in Canada, and his application sponsor Mari, her thirteen-year-old brother, and their mother was recently approved. Mari's parents are concerned about what they see as dangerous moral decadence in Canada. They expect their children to follow their cultural norms and wear the modest clothing from their home country, warning that if they do not, they will be beaten and sent back home. Mari and her brother attend a public high school, where he has seen her wearing makeup and clothing that their family would not approve of during the day. He has threatened to tell their parents. She has come to you, the settlement worker in her school, to talk about her situation. She is frightened, but she tells you that other students have been bullying her about her clothes, and dressing more like the other kids makes her feel much more welcome and secure.



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### Reflection: Mari

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How can you support the family?

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# Gender-Based Violence and Family Violence

## Challenges

*I'm afraid if I tell someone, they will make us all leave the country.*

The experience of immigration puts a great deal of stress on families, and sometimes this stress can increase the likelihood of violence, particularly against close family members. Women are much more likely to be the ones who experience gender-based violence, which can take many forms: physical attacks, sexual

violence, intimidation, stalking, verbal abuse, financial abuse (withholding or strictly controlling access to the family's money), or isolation. Men who experience family violence often feel deep shame that makes them extremely reluctant to seek help. When one family member sponsors another, sometimes an abusive sponsor fails to provide for the sponsored person's needs, or even threatens detention and deportation.

## Supports

*I'm so relieved that I have someone to help me and somewhere to go.*

OCASI provides in-depth training for settlement workers about supporting people who have experienced gender-based violence. Everyone in Canada should know that gender-based violence is illegal here and it is never acceptable.

To support immigrant women experiencing violence, you are encouraged to build strong relationships with local women's shelters. Staff training at immigrant and refugee-supporting agencies can include visits to shelters. Relationships between settlement workers and shelter workers can greatly improve the quality of support that both can provide.

- The [Assaulted Women's Helpline](#)<sup>2</sup>: (866) 863-0511
- The [Ontario Women's Justice Network](#)<sup>3</sup>: information about sponsorship breakdown and immigration status

<sup>2</sup> [goo.gl/25CFeq](http://goo.gl/25CFeq)

<sup>3</sup> [goo.gl/e9cJHp](http://goo.gl/e9cJHp)

# Case study: Nanmani - Domestic Violence

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Nanmani is a 22-year-old woman from southern India sponsored by her husband, who has been living in Canada with his parents, his brother, and his brother's wife. Nanmani arrived in Canada when she was 26 weeks pregnant, and started to experience complications shortly afterward. Her husband's parents refused to allow her to seek medical help because she was not yet insured under OHIP and they did not want to pay for medical expenses. She went into premature labour at 28 weeks and the baby, a girl, had to be delivered by emergency Caesarean section, incurring a hospital bill of more than \$14,000. Her husband's family is extremely angry about the bill, and her mother-in-law has been verbally and physically abusive, blaming Nanmani for not producing a son, and insisting that Nanmani do all the household chores and cooking even while recovering from surgery. Nanmani is allowed to leave the house only to do the shopping for the family. Her mother-in-law gives her a fixed amount of money for this, and studies all the purchases and the receipts carefully. At the supermarket, Nanmani made a friend who spoke her language, and mentioned that she wants to learn English. Her friend suggested that she talk to the settlement worker at the library next door. Because of this recommendation, Nanmani has come to see you.



## Reflection: Nanmani

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How can you support Nanmani?

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# Managing Money

## Challenges

*This is so confusing and embarrassing.  
I don't know how to pay my bills.*

Managing money and dealing with financial institutions can present unfamiliar challenges to many newcomers. Some economic and family class immigrants, and even some refugees, arrive with significant resources. Others may not have much, but they want to learn how to handle what they have.

- How to open a bank account
- How to bank online, by telephone, or at ATMs
- How to apply for loans, including mortgages
- How to connect with Islamic banks that do not charge interest or invest in gambling, pornography, weapons, alcohol, tobacco, or pork, all of which are forbidden to observant Muslims
- How (or whether) to use services like Money Mart for short-term consumer loans
- How to apply for and use credit cards
- What it means to have a credit history, and how to establish one
- How to apply for publicly funded sources of income such as social assistance, the Child Tax Benefit, and the GST rebate
- How and why to file a tax return
- Why they need a Social Insurance Number, and why money for Canada Pension Plan, employment insurance, and income tax is withheld from pay cheques
- Where to invest money, and how to understand various types of investments such as RRSPs, RESPs, non-registered investments, Tax-Free Savings Accounts, GICs, stocks, bonds, and mutual funds

## Supports

Many banks and credit unions recognize that newcomers are a growing market, and tailor programs and services to them. Newcomers not only present a target market for businesses, but can also be targets for scammers and gambling.



*They call every day but now I know not to give out my personal information.*

### Navigating the Canadian financial world

IRCC funds a project called Prosper Canada<sup>4</sup> that offers tools for newcomers to learn about money management in Canada, and for settlement workers to support newcomers with this topic.

The LINC curriculum includes information about banking and finance, so people who take LINC classes to learn English can pick up basic knowledge of how these systems work in Canada.

There are also community organizations that offer workshops and informational resources about managing money in the Canadian system.

The Ontario Securities Commission offers an informational website, Get Smarter about Money,<sup>5</sup> about finding reliable financial advice and investing wisely.

### Avoiding financial scams

Service seekers may have questions about financial scams. Some scammers deliberately target immigrants and refugees, contacting them by telephone or email and pretending to be from IRCC or the Canada Revenue Agency. They use aggressive tactics to demand large sums of money, while threatening loss of immigration status and deportation.

The people you serve should know that IRCC and CRA do not ask for personal information already provided on forms, and they never demand money by email or phone. Anyone receiving such a call or email should report it to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre<sup>6</sup>.

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4 [goo.gl/UT6iye](https://goo.gl/UT6iye)

5 [goo.gl/oxkxdf](https://goo.gl/oxkxdf)

6 [goo.gl/RT9Hnq](https://goo.gl/RT9Hnq)

## Gambling

Immigrants should be aware of the risk involved in gambling. Recent research has revealed that members of some cultural communities regard gambling as a source of income, while others see casinos as friendly, welcoming places where they can speak their own language and play familiar games. Some newcomers may think of gambling as “easy money” and pursue gambling activities instead of looking for work. Many do not recognize problem gambling as an addiction in need of treatment until they have lost everything. [ConnexOntario](#)<sup>7</sup> offers information and referrals in over 170 languages for people concerned about their own gambling behaviour or that of a family member.

## Wrap-Up

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In this chapter and the previous one we have discussed common barriers to successful settlement for immigrants and refugees. We have also considered how these barriers can intersect, compounding their effects, and suggested ways for you as settlement workers to offer support. The information in these chapters about available supports is just a starting point. Spend some time reflecting on what you have learned here, and get familiar with the resources on [Settlement.org](#) and [SettlementAtWork.org](#). Remember that the immigrant and refugee-serving sector is constantly changing and evolving, and learning is lifelong. We hope that this guide has given you the foundations you need to understand the sector and your necessary and valuable work within it.

## Sources and Further Reading

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### Challenge: Culture Shock and Resistance to the New Culture

- Alhawsaw, Hawazin Yousef, [“An Incomplete Jigsaw Puzzle: A Narrative Study on Arab Refugees in Canada”](#)<sup>8</sup> (2016). Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository. 3658.

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7 [goo.gl/UjQTDQ](http://goo.gl/UjQTDQ)

8 [goo.gl/a6PLBL](http://goo.gl/a6PLBL)

## Challenge: Social Isolation

- Nancy Poole and Lorraine Greaves, [Becoming Trauma Informed](#)<sup>9</sup> (book)
- Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness, [Trauma-informed practice in different settings and with various populations: A Discussion Guide for Health and Social Service Providers](#)<sup>10</sup>
- Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health: [Best Practices for Working with Trauma-Affected Newcomers](#)<sup>11</sup>
- Public Health Agency of Canada, [Trauma and violence-informed approaches to policy and practice](#)<sup>12</sup>

## Challenge: Trauma

- [Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture](#)<sup>13</sup> (Greater Toronto Area)
- [Ontario Mental Health Helpline](#)<sup>14</sup> -- 1-866-531-2600
- [Refugee Mental Health Project \(CAMH\)](#)<sup>15</sup>

## Challenge: Family Issues

- Canadian Paediatric Society, [Caring for Kids New to Canada: Community Resources for Immigrant and Refugee Youth](#)<sup>16</sup>
- [NewYouth.ca](#)<sup>17</sup>

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9 [goo.gl/8pWQ9T](http://goo.gl/8pWQ9T)

10 [goo.gl/a9HFMH](http://goo.gl/a9HFMH)

11 [goo.gl/gctuoy](http://goo.gl/gctuoy)

12 [goo.gl/rZjeDK](http://goo.gl/rZjeDK)

13 [goo.gl/uxJH56](http://goo.gl/uxJH56)

14 [goo.gl/RE1eQw](http://goo.gl/RE1eQw)

15 [goo.gl/8UWTNm](http://goo.gl/8UWTNm)

16 [goo.gl/6KmsrM](http://goo.gl/6KmsrM)

17 [goo.gl/SAaRqj](http://goo.gl/SAaRqj)



- [Social Planning Council of Ottawa, Immigrant Children, Youth and Families: A Qualitative Analysis of the Challenges of Integration](#)<sup>18</sup>
- [Study on Parenting Issues of Newcomer Families in Ontario: Waterloo Region Findings](#)<sup>19</sup>

## Challenge: Gender-Based Violence and Family Violence

- [Violence against Women: Neighbours, Friends and Families, Immigrant and Refugee Communities](#)<sup>20</sup>
- [Assaulted Women's Helpline](#)<sup>21</sup>
- [Steps to Justice: Abuse and family violence](#)<sup>22</sup>

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18 [goo.gl/ADxDEm](http://goo.gl/ADxDEm)

19 [goo.gl/vhbCEJ](http://goo.gl/vhbCEJ)

20 [goo.gl/WJpiWE](http://goo.gl/WJpiWE)

21 [goo.gl/CFzxae](http://goo.gl/CFzxae)

22 [goo.gl/gWtwUH](http://goo.gl/gWtwUH)







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