

(from Citizenship & Immigration Canada web site)

Q2. What is meant by government-assisted refugees?

Government-assisted refugees are Convention Refugees Abroad and members of the Source Country Class whose initial resettlement in Canada is supported by the Government of Canada or Quebec.

Refugees selected for resettlement to Canada have often been forced to flee their country because of unimaginable hardship and have in many cases been forced to live in refugee camps for many years. Many of them are victims of trauma or torture and may have special needs, such as women and children at risk. When they arrive in Canada, they have nothing with them but a few personal effects.

Refugee Protection in Canada

Canada offers protection to people in Canada who are afraid of returning to their home country. A claim for protection can be made at a port of entry or at a Canada Immigration Centre (CIC) office in Canada. Once a CIC officer decides that a refugee protection claimant is eligible to be referred, the claim is sent to the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) for a decision on the risk on return.

Protection is conferred when the IRB determines that they are a Convention refugee or person in need of protection.

Convention refugee

A Convention refugee is a person who is outside of their country of nationality or habitual residence and who is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, political opinion, nationality or membership in a particular social group.

Person in need of protection

A person in need of protection is a person in Canada whose removal to their country of nationality or former habitual residence would subject them to the possibility of torture, risk to life, or risk of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.

Protected person

A protected person can either be a Convention refugee or a person in need of protection.

Cases not sent to the IRB

The following categories of persons are not eligible to have a claim referred to the IRB:

- § Persons recognized as Convention refugees by another country to which they can be returned;
- § Persons already determined to be protected persons under the *Immigration and Refugee*

Protection Act or its regulations;

§ Persons who arrived in Canada, directly or indirectly, from a country other than their country of nationality or former habitual residence and designated by the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* regulations;

§ Persons who were determined to be inadmissible on grounds of security, human rights violations, serious criminality or organized criminality;

§ Persons who had a previous refugee protection claim rejected by the IRB;

§ Persons who had a previous refugee protection claim determined to be ineligible for referral to the IRB; or

§ Persons who had a previous refugee protection claim withdrawn or abandoned.

Q3. What kind of support are they provided?

The Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) provides government-assisted refugees with immediate resettlement assistance in the form of support services and income support.

Immediate and essential support services provided under RAP may include:

- airport reception;
- temporary accommodation and assistance in finding permanent accommodation;
- help with registration for mandatory federal and provincial programs;
- non-financial orientation, including safety contacts and emergency services, public transportation, education system, knowledge of the city of destination, Canadian laws and customs, and climate;
- financial orientation such as budgeting, setting up a bank account, and use of debit and credit card; and
- referrals to other settlement programs.

Income support is provided under the RAP to those eligible government-assisted refugees who lack the resources to provide for their own basic needs. This support is provided in the form of a one-time initial household start-up allowance and a monthly income support payment. The level of income support is guided by the prevailing provincial social assistance rates in their province of residence.



Q4. Is the support the same across Canada?

The RAP support services provided to government assisted refugees are the same across Canada.

Since the monthly income support provided under the RAP is guided by provincial social assistance rates it varies slightly from province to province. A single government-assisted refugee who settles in Ontario, for example, will receive \$580 per month as RAP income support. This amount covers food, shelter, and transportation allowances.

In most cases, the first month's income support payment is larger because it includes additional funds provided on a one-time basis for basic household start-up needs on top of the standard monthly income support amount for food and shelter.



Q5. How is this start-up funding broken down?

The one-time start-up amount provided is used to cover:

- **Basic household needs** – to purchase, usually by CIC through a standing offer, a basic furniture

package that includes a bed, table and chairs, bed linens, basic window coverings and common household products such as kitchen utensils, pots and pans and brooms.

- **Staple allowance** – to purchase various items to set up a household such as food staples (flour, sugar, condiments, etc.) and cleaning/living items (laundry detergent and cleaning products).
- **Clothing allowance** – to provide for the most basic clothing needs.
- **Winter clothing allowance** – to cover the cost of a winter coat, boots, hat, etc. (this clothing may be provided to a refugee at the port of entry if the person arrives during winter months).



Q6. Do large and small families get the same amount of money?

The rates provided for household start-up will vary by family size. There are also other special allowances that may be provided depending on circumstances.



Q7. What are these special allowances?

The special allowances include:

- an allowance for children under six years of age;
- a school start-up allowance for children attending school from kindergarten to Grade 13;
- a maternity allowance for pregnant women; and
- a newborn allowance to allow a family to purchase clothing and furniture for their child.



Q8. How long does the support provided to government-assisted refugees last?

Income support can last up to one year from the date of arrival in Canada, or until the refugee is able to support himself or herself, whichever happens first. Special-needs clients selected under the [Joint Assistance Sponsorship](#) program may receive RAP income support for up to 24 months or more. The vast majority of refugees, however, receive assistance only for 12 months or less.

Support services provided under the RAP are generally delivered within the first four to six weeks after the government-assisted refugee arrives in Canada.



Q9. Is all of the support to government-assisted refugees provided by the government?

Support services for government-assisted refugees are provided by service provider organizations located throughout Canada which are funded by the government through the Resettlement Assistance Program.

Income support for government-assisted refugees is provided directly by the Government of Canada.



Q10. Is resettlement assistance provided to refugee claimants or privately sponsored refugees?

No. Refugee claimants have not been selected for resettlement and are therefore not eligible to receive any sort of resettlement assistance either in the form of income support or services support.

As for privately sponsored refugees, it is the responsibility of the sponsoring group and not the Government of Canada to complete a settlement plan that outlines the arrangements to be put in place for the sponsored refugees. This includes helping them find suitable housing, learn English or French, get a job, make friends, and learn about Canadian culture and values as well as the services available in the community. The sponsoring group must also provide for the reception, care, lodging and settlement assistance for the sponsored refugees in the expected community of settlement for a period of 12 months (or longer in exceptional circumstances, if agreed to by the sponsoring group) from the

date of arrival of the refugee or until the refugee becomes self-supporting and no longer requires settlement assistance, whichever is less.

In some cases a cost-sharing arrangement can be undertaken which involves the federal government providing some financial support to assist in the privately sponsored refugee's initial resettlement. As well, privately sponsored refugees and their sponsors may have access to some of the orientation services provided to RAP clients.

For more information on Private Sponsorship of Refugees program, see: www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/private-faq.html



Q11. A widely circulated e-mail alleges that government-assisted refugees receive much more income support and benefits than Canadian pensioners. Is this accurate?

The e-mail comparing pensioners to refugees contains misinformation that implies that government-assisted refugees receive far higher monthly income support amounts than is in fact the case. The amount of monthly income support provided to government-assisted refugees is based on prevailing provincial social assistance rates and provides the minimum amount required to cover only the most basic food and shelter needs.

It should be noted as well that refugees selected for resettlement to Canada have often been forced to flee their country because of unimaginable hardship and have in many cases been forced to live in refugee camps for many years. When they arrive in Canada, they are required to start their lives again in a country very different from their own.

In keeping with Canada's proud humanitarian traditions, individuals and families are provided with immediate and essential services and support to assist in helping them become established in Canada.