

Connecting to Your

new Community

A Resource Guide

for Refugee Claimants



Canadian Red Cross



EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

911

For police, fire department and ambulance services.
Call this number only if it's an emergency.

416-808 2222

Police- Non-Emergency

416-340 8844

AIDS Hotline

416-863 0511

Assaulted Victims Help Line

416-392 6655

Hunger Hotline

(416-397 4636
after hours)

Our Mission

The Canadian Red Cross is part of
the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Together with more than 178 national societies,

the organization is focused on one goal:

to improve the situation of the most vulnerable.

We help deal with situations that threaten:

- their survival and safety
- their security and well being
- their human dignity

both in Canada and around the world,

in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the

Red Cross.



The Fundamental Principles

Humanity	The Red Cross, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battle field, endeavours in its International and National capacity to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.
Impartiality	It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours only to relieve suffering, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress.
Neutrality	In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Red Cross may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.
Independence	The Red Cross is independent. The National Societies while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with Red Cross principles.
Voluntary Service	The Red Cross is a volunteer relief organization not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.
Unity	There can be only one Red Cross Society in any one Country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.
Universality	The Red Cross is a worldwide institution in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other.

The Fundamental Principles were proclaimed by the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross, Vienna, 1965. This is the revised text contained in the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, adopted by the XXVth International Conference of the Red Cross, Geneva, 1986.

Acknowledgements

The Canadian Red Cross wishes to thank all of the organizations that contributed ideas, material and financial support to this resource manual.

These organizations include:

The FCJ Hamilton House, the Government of Canada, Settlement.Org and Community Information Toronto. **Funding for this project is provided by the Government of Canada's Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative, administered by the City of Toronto.**

Thanks also to the Refugee Housing Task Group members who conceived and helped in the drafting of this resource manual.

Designed by PRM (Positive Results Marketing Inc.)



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

ARRIVING IN TORONTO

Being a refugee in Toronto: pros and cons.....	8
Toronto weather.....	9
Public holidays in Canada.....	9

CLAIMING REFUGEE STATUS

Who is recognized as a refugee in Canada?	10
Who makes decisions about refugee claims in Canada?	10
When can you claim refugee status?	10
Checklist: Refugee claim essentials.....	10
Important contacts for processing your refugee claim.....	11
Internet resources for refugee claimants.....	11
Initiating a refugee claim	12
From outside of Canada.....	12
From inside Canada.....	12
Next steps: after your eligibility interview	13
If you are eligible.....	13
If you are not eligible.....	13
Things you should know when making your refugee claim	14
Your rights and responsibilities as a refugee claimant	15
Your immigration medical health examination	16
Your refugee protection hearing	17
If your claim is accepted	18
If your claim is rejected	18
The Pre-Removal Risk Assessment.....	19
Removal from Canada.....	19

LIVING AS A REFUGEE CLAIMANT IN TORONTO

Your first few days in Toronto.....	20
Temporary shelter	20
Refugee-only shelters.....	20-24
Women-only shelters.....	20-24
Men-only shelters.....	20-24
Shelters for young adults.....	20-24
Hostels.....	20-24
Free hot meals and food	24
Hot meals.....	25
Food banks.....	25
Permanent accommodation: moving to your own residence	26
Tips on how to find a residence.....	26
Tips on what to consider when looking for a residence.....	26
Your rights and responsibilities as a tenant.....	27
Telephone service.....	27
Cable TV service.....	27
Change of residence.....	27

Opening a bank account	28
Bank cards.....	28
Changing banks.....	28
Getting around: public transportation in Toronto	29
How to make your money go further	29
Where to get things for free.....	29
Free clothing.....	29-30
Free beds.....	30
Free furniture.....	30
Where to get things at a low cost.....	30-31
Free/low cost communication.....	31
Voice mail.....	31
Internet access and e-mail.....	31
Coping with stress	32
What is stress?.....	32
Unhealthy ways of coping with stress.....	32
Healthy ways of coping with stress.....	32
Where to get help with stress management.....	33

GETTING THE SUPPORT YOU NEED AS A REFUGEE CLAIMANT IN TORONTO

Legal aid	34
Finding a good lawyer.....	34
Qualifying for Legal Aid.....	34
Applying for Legal Aid.....	35
Legal Aid Offices in Toronto.....	35
Community Legal Clinics.....	36
Community Legal Education Ontario.....	36
Health care	37
Your healthcare rights.....	38
Important health services for refugee claimants.....	38-39
Employment	39
Applying for a work permit/authorization and/or student permit.....	39
Applying for a Social Insurance Number.....	40
Human Resources Development Canada offices in Toronto.....	40
Job search and computer resources.....	40-42
Internet job search resources.....	42
Social and financial assistance	42
Applying for welfare assistance/Ontario Works benefits.....	42
Where to find to apply for social assistance.....	43-44
Education	45
Academic equivalency.....	45
Professional qualifications.....	45
Language training.....	45
Other types of help: NGOs that can help refugee claimants.....	46



Introduction

This resource guide is primarily for refugee claimants who have arrived in Toronto. It can also be used by organizations that help refugees. The guide provides information about claiming refugee status and about housing, social services, legal and health services for refugee claimants in the Greater Toronto Area. New refugees may also visit First Contact. This drop-in centre provides information and referral services to refugee claimants. It is located at the Red Cross office at 2 Homewood Avenue in Toronto (at the corner of Carlton St. and Jarvis St.).

First Contact's phone number is **416- 771-9540**.

LET US INTRODUCE OURSELVES...

The Toronto Region of Canadian Red Cross and the City of Toronto's Refugee Housing Task Group (RHTG) produced this resource manual. The Canadian Red Cross is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Its focus is to improve the situation of the most vulnerable. The Red Cross's international mandate is to meet human needs. This includes helping asylum seekers, regardless of their status. RHTG works to reduce homelessness and to help refugee claimants avoid mistreatment and poverty. It is made up of representatives from the City of Toronto, the provincial government, and community groups that provide services for refugees. RHTG also develops plans to help refugees with settlement, shelter and affordable housing.

This resource manual was made possible by the generous funding from Supporting Communities Partnership Initiatives (SCPI). It was researched and written by staff and volunteers at the Canadian Red Cross First Contact program. First Contact helps refugee claimants who have just arrived in Toronto and works to ensure that they settle successfully in the community.

We hope this resource manual will help new refugee claimants find reliable and accurate information about services that can help them get settled in the Greater Toronto Area.

Disclaimer:

All of the information in this manual was accurate at the time of publication. However, we are not responsible for changes of information that will occur over time.

Arriving in Toronto

Welcome to Toronto!



Toronto is the largest and most culturally diverse city in Canada. It is in the province of Ontario, which as you will discover... is 'Yours to Discover'!

Toronto has the largest number of immigrants and refugee claimants of any city in Canada. For these reasons, settling in Toronto has its pros and cons. For more information on Toronto, visit www.city.toronto.on.ca

BEING A REFUGEE IN TORONTO

	PROS	CONS
SHELTER	Settlement services There is a wide range of service agencies that can help you get settled and support you through the refugee claim process.	Low vacancy rate Toronto has a low vacancy rate. This means that there are not many available apartments to rent in Toronto. Apartments in Toronto are more expensive than apartments in other cities in Ontario such as St. Catharines or Hamilton.
JOBS	A larger job market Toronto is the business centre of Canada. Because of this, there are a variety of skilled and unskilled jobs available.	A more competitive job market Because so many people live in Toronto, competition for jobs is very intense. Depending on your skills and qualifications, you might be more successful finding a job in a smaller city or town
PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES	Cultural diversity Toronto has been rated as the world's most culturally diverse city. More than 80 ethnic communities are represented in Toronto. Finding organizations and people familiar with your ethnic background may be easier, and may help you adjust to life in Toronto.	Alienation Some people feel "lost in a crowd" living in a big city like Toronto. If you prefer smaller towns and cities, ask your housing or settlement worker about areas outside of Toronto.



Arriving in Toronto

Toronto Weather

Weather conditions in Toronto range from very cold in winter to very hot in summer. Here are the average temperatures in Toronto for each month.

	Hi		Lo	
	C	F	C	F
Jan	-1	29	-8	18
Feb	-1	30	-7	19
Mar	4	38	-3	27
Apr	10	50	3	37
May	16	61	8	46
Jun	22	71	13	55
Jul	25	77	16	61
Aug	24	76	16	62
Sep	20	68	13	55
Oct	13	56	7	44
Nov	7	45	2	35
Dec	1	35	-5	44

C = degrees, Celsius
F = degrees, Fahrenheit

A bit about Canadian government and politics

- Canada gained independence (from the United Kingdom) on 1 July 1867.
- Canada is divided into ten provinces and three territories, in five regions. Toronto is in the province of Ontario.
- The capital of Canada is Ottawa, Ontario.
- The head of the majority party in the Canadian Parliament is the Prime Minister, who is the Head of Government.

For more on the Government of Canada please visit http://www.gc.ca/main_e.html

Public Holidays in Canada

1 January	New Year's Day
The Monday on or preceding 24 May	Victoria Day
1 July	Canada Day
1st Monday in August	Civic or Provincial Holiday
1st Monday in September	Labour Day
2nd Monday in October	Thanksgiving Day
11 November	Remembrance Day
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Boxing Day

If Canada Day falls on a Saturday, the following Monday is a holiday.

Claiming Refugee Status

WHO IS RECOGNIZED AS A REFUGEE IN CANADA?

A refugee claimant is a person who has arrived in Canada and seeks "Convention Refugee" status. This term refers to the Geneva Convention. A refugee claimant is sometimes referred to as an asylum seeker.

Since 1969, Canada has adhered to the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol. These recognise a refugee as a person who:

- Has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, and/or membership in a particular social group or who holds a particular political opinion,
- And is outside the country of his or her nationality and cannot or, because of fear of persecution, does not want to avail him- or herself of the protection of that country,
- Or who does not have a nationality and is outside the country that was his or her former habitual residence and, because of this and/or because of fear of persecution, cannot not or does not want to return to it.

Canada has expanded this definition of refugee to include:

People in need of protection whose removal to their country of nationality would subject them to:

- The possibility of torture, as defined by the Convention against Torture, or
- The risk of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment, or risk to their lives.

WHEN CAN YOU CLAIM REFUGEE STATUS?

If you fit Canada's definition of a refugee, you can claim refugee status either by notifying an immigration officer when you arrive at a port of entry into Canada or after you are already in Canada. You do not have to have legal status in Canada to apply to be a Convention Refugee.

Who makes decisions about refugee claims in Canada?

The Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) is the body that decides who qualifies as a refugee in Canada. The IRB is an independent administrative tribunal that is accountable to the Parliament of Canada through the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Its duty is to make well-reasoned decisions on immigration and refugee matters, efficiently, fairly and in accordance with the law. It has three divisions: the Refugee Protection Division, the Immigration Division, and the Immigration Appeal Division. The Refugee Protection Division rules on claims for protection made from within Canada. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) decides on protection claims in Canadian embassies and consulates.

Checklist: Refugee Claim Essentials

There are many steps to making a refugee claim. They are:

1. Get an address (a place to stay) in Canada. *For more information on this, please see page 20.*
2. Complete and submit a Personal Information Form within 28 days of



Claiming Refugee Status

making your claim for refugee status. For more information on this, please see page 10.

3. Contact an organisation that helps refugee claimants to get information about the refugee claim process and any help you may need. For more information on this, please see page 12.

4. Have an immigration medical health examination as soon as possible. For more information on this, please see page 16.

5. Apply for social assistance (welfare), if you need it. Note: you must have a permanent address before you can apply for social assistance. For more information on this, please see page 42.

6. Prepare your story of persecution. In other words, prepare to explain why you feel you will be persecuted if you are returned to your home country and why you are claiming refugee status. The best way to do this is to write down the sequence of events that led you to flee your country. This will help you get your thoughts organized before you meet with a lawyer.

7. Find a lawyer. For more information on this, please see page 34.

8. Apply for Legal Aid, if you need help paying for a lawyer. For more information on this, please see page 35.

9. Apply for Social Insurance Number (SIN). For more information on this, please see page 40.

10. Find schools for any children who may have accompanied you to Canada. Apply for English as a Second Language training, if you need it.

For more information on this, please see page 45.

11. Apply for a work permit. For more information on this, please see page 39.

Important contacts for processing your refugee claim

Citizenship and Immigration Canada
416-973-4444

5343 Dundas St. W.

How to get there: Take the subway to Kipling station. The office is located behind the subway parking lot.

_____ or _____

55 St. Clair Ave. E.

How to get there: Take the subway to St. Clair station. Exit on St Clair Avenue and walk 2 blocks east.

Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB)
416-954-1000

74 Victoria St., Suite 400

How to get there: Take the subway to Queen station. Walk east on Queen Street for one block to Victoria Street. Walk south on Victoria Street.

Internet resources for refugee claimants

Immigration

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB): www.irb.gc.ca

The Immigration and Refugee Board is an independent tribunal that makes decisions about refugee claims and immigration matters.

Settlement

Settlement.Org: www.settlement.org
Settlement.org is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. It is designed to help settlement workers and newcomers to Canada.

INITIATING A REFUGEE CLAIM

You can make a claim for refugee status from outside of Canada or after you are in Canada.

Initiating a refugee claim from outside of Canada

You can make a refugee claim at any port of entry to Canada: at any border crossing, sea port or international airport. All you have to do is tell an immigration officer that you want to make a refugee claim. It is extremely important that you do this as soon as possible after you have arrived at a port of entry into Canada. Canadian immigration officers are not allowed to send back or deny entry to anyone who makes a refugee claim.

If you are coming to Canada by land from the United States, you can contact the following United States non-governmental organisations for more information on how to make a refugee claim:

VIVE in Buffalo, New York:
(716) 892-4354

Freedom House in Detroit, Michigan:
(313) 964-4320.

Making a refugee claim from within Canada

This is called making an "in-land" claim. The process for making an in-land claim has been undergoing some major changes recently, but the following should serve as a guide for you.

If you are staying at a private residence

If you have your own private accommodation or are staying at a friend's place or with relatives, follow these steps:

Step 1. Go to your local Canadian Immigration Centre and tell an immigration officer that you want to make a refugee claim. The immigration officer will ask you for some personal details, like your name and address. You will be given a security check form (also called Schedule 1). You will have to fill in this form and bring it with you when you return for your Eligibility Interview. The immigration officer will set a date for interview. This usually happens two weeks later.

Step 2. Go to your Eligibility Interview at the scheduled time. All in-land claims interviews are held at the Inland Refugee Processing Centre. This is located at the Canada Immigration Centre at 5343 Dundas St. W. in Etobicoke. Usually the appointment is for 7 a.m., but you should expect to be there until the Centre closes at 5 p.m.

You must take with you the following:

- All of your identity documents, including:

- Your passport;
- Your travel documents;
- Your identity card; and
- Your birth certificate from your home country.

You must bring the original documents. Photocopies will not be accepted!

- 7 passport size photographs of yourself.
- Your completed security check form (Schedule 1).
- The original application letter you were given when you declared your intention to apply for refugee status.



Claiming Refugee Status

If you are staying at a shelter

If you are staying at a shelter, you do not need to go to a Canadian Immigration Centre to set up a personal appointment. Just tell your shelter worker that you want to claim refugee status. The shelter workers will make an appointment for you with the immigration authorities. Then you follow Step 2 above.

Next steps: after your eligibility interview

After your Eligibility Interview, you will be told whether you are eligible to make a refugee claim.

If you are eligible

If you are told that you are eligible to make a refugee claim, this means that your case can now go to the Immigration and Refugee Board. This is the body that will decide whether you will be allowed to stay in Canada.

You will be given a "Refugee Packet." This contains:

- An IMM 1442 "Acknowledgement of Convention Refugee Claim" form.
- A Personal Information Form (PIF). You use this form to provide personal details about yourself and a detailed account of why you are afraid to return to your home country. Your PIF is a very important part of your refugee claim. It is highly recommended that you have a good lawyer to help you fill out your PIF. You may be able to get help from a legal clinic if you are not eligible for Legal Aid and cannot afford a lawyer. For more information on this, please see page 37 or call First Contact at **416-771-9540**.
- Medical forms. These are special

forms that a doctor designated by Canada immigration must complete. A list of doctors is included in the refugee packet.

- A notice to appear before the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB).
- A conditional removal order. This form is used to remove you from Canada if you lose or withdraw your claim for refugee status or if your case is declared abandoned.

After you have completed these documents and they have been processed by your Canadian Immigration Centre, you will be eligible to apply for social benefits; such as social assistance, health, education for minors, English classes for adults and legal aid assistance.

If you are not eligible

You will be told that you are not eligible to make a refugee claim if you have:

- a) been granted a "Convention Refugee Status" in another country to which you may return.
- b) already been found to be ineligible to make a claim.
- c) already been rejected by the Immigration and Refugee Board, which decides whether to grant refugee status.
- d) a previous claim that has been declared withdrawn or abandoned by the Refugee Protection Division (RPD).
- e) been named in an un-enforced removal order.
- f) a serious criminal record or are considered a security risk based on suspected past involvement in terrorism, human rights violations, war crimes and/or crimes against humanity.

Things you should know when making your refugee claim

- Anything you tell Canadian immigration officials may be used at any stage of your refugee claim process.
- Always tell the truth. If you have misrepresented yourself at any point for any reason, you should explain yourself. It is best to do this as soon as possible. This is the best way to avoid any enforcement measures, such as detention.
- In Canada, each refugee claim is treated individually. You and your family members will be considered separately.
- There is no age limit for making a refugee claim in Canada. A child who is not accompanied by an adult may make a refugee claim.
- The process for making a refugee claim may be different from one border check (or port of entry) to another.
- When you make a refugee claim, you have the right to use an interpreter. If you need an interpreter to help you fill out forms, you must arrange this on your own. If you need an interpreter at your refugee claim hearing, all you have to do is ask. The Immigration and Refugee Board will arrange to get one for you.
- Save every piece of communication you have with the Immigration and Refugee Board about your claim. This could include photocopies of everything you or someone else has done on your behalf that was sent to Canadian authorities. Also, keep everything you receive from the authorities, from your counsel or from any other institution or person regarding your refugee claim. Save all of the envelopes, too. This will prove when and how you received a piece of information.
- If you have been judged eligible to make a refugee claim, it is a good idea to get legal counsel. A lawyer can help you fill out and review all of the forms you have to complete. And, while legal workers and consultants can represent you at the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), only lawyers can bring cases before the Federal Court and the Supreme Court of Canada if your claim is rejected by the IRB.
- Dates (such as birth dates, travelling dates, significant events, etc.) are very important. If you can't remember or are unsure of a specific date, give an approximate time.
- If at any time during the refugee claim process you do not know an answer to a question, say you don't know and explain why.
- If you change your address at any time, you must report your new address to the Immigration and Refugee Board, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Legal Aid (if you are receiving legal aid) and your immigration lawyer. It is important that you do not miss any communication from any of these parties.



Claiming Refugee Status

YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A REFUGEE CLAIMANT

Your rights as a refugee claimant

As a refugee claimant, you have certain rights. These include the right to legal counsel to help you with your refugee claim, the right to financial assistance if you need it, the right to health care, the right to work in some cases, and the right to education and/or language training in some cases.

Legal aid

Throughout the refugee claim process, you have the right to either speak for yourself or be represented by legal counsel. If you do not want to be represented by a lawyer, you can choose a friend, relative or other individual to act as your counsel. If you can prove that you cannot afford a lawyer, an immigration lawyer will be provided to you at no charge through Legal Aid.

For more information on getting good legal advice, please see page 34. For more information on legal aid, please see page 34.

Employment

As a refugee claimant, you may be eligible to apply for permission to work. This is called "employment authorization." Generally, you are eligible to work only if you would otherwise have to rely on public assistance to survive. Before you can apply for permission to work, you must:

- fill out and return your Personal Information Form to the Immigration and Refugee Board;

- have an immigration medical health examination; and
- apply for a Social Insurance Number.

For information on applying for a Social Insurance Number, please see page 40.

Education

As a refugee claimant, you can apply for "student authorization: to learn English as a Second Language or to attend academic or vocational training. If you have children, they have the right to a free education while waiting for a decision on their claims. You have the same right if you are a young person under the age of 18.

For more information on education and English as a Second Language programs, please see page 45.

Financial assistance

If you are not able to survive without help from public funds, you can ask for help. This help may include money for basic shelter, food and incidental expenses. You may also be able to get help if you are moving from a temporary or emergency shelter to your own new residence.

For more information on getting financial assistance, please see page 42.

Health care

The Interim Federal Health Program, administered by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, provides emergency and essential health services for refugee claimants who cannot afford to pay for these services. When your claim for refugee status has been accepted and you are granted Convention Refugee Status, you will

be able to apply to be covered by OHIP (the Ontario Health Insurance Program). An OHIP card lets you get many health services free of charge.

For more information on health care, please see page 37.

Your responsibilities as a refugee claimant

As a refugee claimant, you have some responsibilities. You must:

1. Submit the documents that are needed to make your refugee claim. You must submit a Personal Information Form to the Immigration and Refugee Board within 28 days from the time you received your Refugee Packet. If, for any reason, you more time to submit your Personal Information Form, request an extension before the 28 days expire.

2. Undergo an Immigration Medical Health Examination. When you first claim refugee status, you will be given a list of medical doctors. You must visit one of these doctors and undergo a complete a medical examination within 60 days of claiming refugee status. This is a condition of your being allowed to stay in Canada. If you do not complete a medical exam, this could constitute a violation of your terms of stay and you could be removed from Canada. *For more information on your immigration medical health exam, please refer to "Your Immigration Medical Health Examination" on this page.*

3. Let immigration authorities know if you change your address. As a refugee claimant, you are required by law to notify the immigration authorities and the Immigration

and Refugee Board if you move to a new address. If you are receiving any services such as an allowance for shelter/housing, food, clothing or other expenses, you must also notify Social Services. Letting the authorities know your new address will also help to make sure that you receive all the mail that may be important to your claim.

4. Let your social worker know of any changes to your financial situation. If you are receiving any social assistance, you must inform your social worker of all changes in your financial circumstances. This includes any change to the amount of rent you must pay, any change to the amount of money you are earning if you have a job, or any change to the number of people living in your household.

YOUR IMMIGRATION MEDICAL HEALTH EXAMINATION

If you are making a refugee claim in Canada, you must undergo an immigration medical health examination. The examination must be conducted by one of the doctors on the list that Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) gave you when you made your refugee claim.

You have 60 days from the time you make your refugee claim to have your medical examination. But it is better to have it sooner than that because so many other things depend on the examination. For example, you will not be able to get permission to work in Canada until you have had your medical examination. For this reason, you should make an appointment to



Claiming Refugee Status

see one of the doctors approved by CIC within the first 2 weeks of making your claim.

You do not have to pay to see a doctor. As a refugee claimant, you can get free health care that is paid for by the Interim Federal Health Program.

Finding a doctor

Look at the list of doctors you received from immigration officials when you made your refugee claim. Start by calling the doctor nearest to where you are staying. You may have to call more than one doctor. Not all of the doctors on the list will be accepting patients all the time. If you need a list of doctors that is more up to date, call First Contact at **416-771-9540**.

Your appointment

When you go to the doctor to have your medical examination, take the following documents with you:

1. Your IMM 1442 "Acknowledgement of Convention Refugee Claim" form.
2. Three passport-size photographs of yourself, and three of each member of your family who is taking a medical examination.

It is important to understand that:

- Your doctor is responsible only for conducting a medical examination according to Canada's immigration rules. Your doctor cannot give you any advice about the immigration process.
- All medical reports and X-rays for your immigration medical health examination are the property of the

Canadian Immigration Medical Authorities. They cannot be returned to you. Your doctor will not tell you the results of the medical examination. However, he/she will tell you if you have a health-related problem. Your doctor does not make the final decision about whether you have passed the medical examination for immigration purposes. This decision is made by the immigration office. The immigration office will inform you in writing if there is any problem with your medical examination

YOUR REFUGEE PROTECTION HEARING

The refugee protection hearing is an inquiry. Its purpose is to allow an Immigration and Refugee Board member (who acts as a quasi-judge) to gather the information that is needed to make a decision on your claim for refugee protection.

Most hearings are scheduled for half a day, but your hearing could be shorter (around 2 hours) or longer (a full day or more).

Your refugee claim hearing is very important. You have a right to have a lawyer or other representative with you at the hearing. This is an important right. If you do not have the money to hire a lawyer, you may be able to apply for legal aid. Please see page 35 for more information about legal aid. Before you go to the hearing, your immigration lawyer will explain to you what happens at the hearing and will help you to prepare.

You also have a right to have an interpreter at the hearing at no charge. If you have any questions about whether

the interpreter is properly interpreting what you say or what anyone else is saying, tell your lawyer.

There are usually one or two members of the Immigration and Refugee Board, and a Refugee Claims Officer, at a refugee claim hearing. The Board members will ask you questions about your application and why you are unable to return to your home country. You may also be asked questions that will help to establish your identity. The hearing is an opportunity for you to tell everything that is relevant to your claim and to produce additional supporting evidence, such as police and medical records. It is also helpful if you can produce documents that show the situation in your country of origin. You are required by law to produce these documents as soon as you have them, or at least 20 days before the hearing, so as to allow the Immigration Protection Board to look over them. If your documents are not in English or French, try to have them translated.

Each application for refugee status is evaluated separately. However, if you and your immediate family members are all making refugee claims, all of your claims will be heard together in one hearing.

After the hearing, usually on the same day, a decision will be made about your case. All decisions about your refugee claim will be given to you in writing, even if the decision is also given to you orally at the end of the hearing. It can take a little as a few days or as long as several months to get the written decision. You will also receive the reasons for the decision, especially if the decision is negative.

IF YOUR CLAIM IS ACCEPTED

If your refugee claim is accepted, this means that you have been found to be a Convention Refugee. You will be allowed to stay in Canada.

As a Convention Refugee/Protected Person, you have 180 days from the time you are granted status to submit an application for permanent residence. It takes approximately 18 months to process this application and costs \$550 for each adult and \$150 for each dependent under the age of 22.

IF YOUR CLAIM IS REJECTED

If your claim is rejected by the Immigration and Refugee Board, you have no right to appeal under the current law. You will receive a notice telling you that you must leave Canada. You will be told that you have 30 days to leave Canada voluntarily. If you leave voluntarily within 30 days, there will be no legal obstacle to you if you want to return to Canada in the future. If you do not leave voluntarily, a deportation order will be made against you. This means that you will not be able to return to Canada in the future as a visitor or immigrant unless you get special permission from the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Although you cannot appeal the decision of the Immigration and Refugee Board, you can consider:

1. Applying for a judiciary review of your case to see if the Immigration and Refugee Board member followed all the legal rules for making a decision.



Claiming Refugee Status

Very few applicants have successfully applied for a judiciary review.

2. Applying for a Pre Removal Risk Assessment.

The Pre-Removal Risk Assessment (PRRA)

Officers of Citizenship and Immigration Canada do the Pre-Removal Risk Assessment. Like the Immigration and Refugee Board, their job is to decide whether a person is a Convention Refugee or a Person in Need of Protection.

When you receive a notice from Citizenship and Immigration Canada letting you know that they are ready to remove you from Canada, you will also receive a PRRA application. You have 15 days to state whether or not you wish to apply for this assessment. If you do, you have another 15 days to make any written submissions. The only information you are allowed to submit for the PRRA is new information – in other words, information that became available only after the date of your refugee protection hearing. Information that was already presented to the Immigration and Refugee Board will not be considered at a PRRA. If you decide to apply for a PRRA, you are strongly advised to get advice and help from a lawyer.

If you are accepted under PRRA, you will be granted status as a protected person and you will be allowed to apply for permanent residence in Canada.

Removal from Canada

If your refugee claim is rejected, or if you are not successful with your judiciary review of appeal, a deportation order will be issued against you. Your options are very limited at this point. You can apply for landed status on Humanitarian and Compassionate grounds (H & C). H&C applications provide a safeguard for people who should be allowed to remain in Canada and make it their home but who otherwise do not qualify under immigration rules. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration decides whether or not to consider H&C applications. You could also enlist the services of non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups like Amnesty International, who may be able to help show that your deportation may seriously endanger your life. *For a list of non-governmental organizations that may be able to help you, please see page 46.*

If all of these avenues are unsuccessful, you will normally be sent to the country from which you came from to Canada. If you do not have the money to buy a ticket to return to your home country, the Government of Canada will provide a ticket for you. If you plan to try to return to Canada in the future and settle here as an immigrant or a refugee, you will have to repay the cost of your ticket.

Living as a Refugee Claimant in Toronto

YOUR FIRST FEW DAYS IN TORONTO

TEMPORARY SHELTER

In Toronto, you can find free accommodation at shelters. Most shelters take in all types of homeless people, including refugee claimants. Some shelters are for refugees only.

If you have some money and do not want to stay in a shelter, you can stay at an inexpensive hostel.

You can contact most shelters directly.

The next few pages list Toronto shelters along with their phone numbers and other information. If you want help finding a shelter, you can call one of the following 24-hour telephone information lines:

Green Field Central Family Intake 416-397-5637

Green Field Central Family Intake helps families to find a shelter or hostel.

Street Helpline 416-392-3777

Street Helpline helps single individuals to find emergency shelter.

Shelters and Hostels

Shelter & Address	Telephone	Refugee Only	Woman	Men	Family	Capacity	Cost	Special Notes
REFUGEE SHELTERS Romero House 175 Keele St.	416-763-1303	✓			✓	30		- You must apply in person - Refugee claimants may stay up to one year or until they find alternative accommodation, whichever time period is shorter.
Sojourn House 51 Bond St.	416-864-0515	✓	✓	✓	✓	44		- Has staff experienced in working with refugee claimants - Single persons can apply in person - Families must call Green Field Central Family Intake to apply
Matthew House 981 Dundas St. West	416-203-7848		✓	✓		12		- Accepts both men and women - Please call for space availability
FCJ Hamilton House (Address Withheld)	416-469-9754		✓		✓	20		- Accepts woman and children only. You can walk in or phone in advance.

Cont....



Living as a Refugee Claimant in Toronto

Shelters and Hostels *Cont....*

Shelter & Address	Telephone	Refugee Only	Woman	Men	Family	Capacity	Cost	Special Notes
COSTI Reception (Address Withheld)	contact through Greenfield Central Family Intake		✓	✓	✓	120		- Accepts families and singles - Families must call Green Field Central Family Intake to apply
Brottier House (Address Withheld)	416-690-6155		✓			n/a		- Accepts women only. Phone in advance to see if there are any vacancies.
SINGLE WOMEN SHELTERS Salvation Army Evangeline Residence	416-762-4678		✓			71		- For women 16 years of age and over, including refugees and victims of assault or sexual assault
Wood Green Red Door Family Shelter	contact through Greenfield Central Family Intake		✓			n/a		For abused women, female refugee claimants and females who are evicted from their place of residence. - Women must apply through Green Field Central Family Intake.
Street Haven	416-967-6060		✓			30		- Phone to apply.
Fred Victor Women's Hostel	416-368-2642		✓			40		- Phone to apply.
SINGLE MEN SHELTERS NA-ME-RES Native Men's Residence 14 Vaughan Road	416-652-0334			✓		50		- Men can apply in person. - Help will be provided for individual males trying to access permanent housing and may provide transportation to other shelters.

Cont....

Shelters and Hostels *Cont....*

Shelter & Address	Telephone	Refugee Only	Woman	Men	Family	Capacity	Cost	Special Notes
Salvation Army Hope 167 College St.	416-979-7058			✓		108		- Offers counselling and help in finding accommodation. - Holds regular group meetings with shelter residents to help with their needs. Must call ahead to apply for services.
Salvation Gateway 107 Jarvis Street	416-368-0324			✓		100		- You must apply in person between 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. - Offers drop in services for both men and woman everyday including meals, showers and laundry facilities
Seaton House 339 George Street	416-392-5522			✓		500		- Has experience working with refugee claimants - Phone in advance to see if there are vacancies. Go in person if it's an emergency.
Good Shepherd 412 Queen Street	416-869-3619			✓		91		- Report to centre at 5:30 p.m. for intake.
YOUNG ADULT SHELTERS								
Covenant House 20 Gerrard St. East	416-593-4849		✓	✓		88		- You must be between the ages of 16 to 22 to apply. - Wheelchair accessible.
Turning Point Youth Services 95 Wellesley Street East	416-925-9250			✓		50		- You must be male and between 16 and 24 years old. - You must apply in person.

Cont....



Living as a Refugee Claimant in Toronto

Shelters and Hostels *Cont....*

Shelter & Address	Telephone	Refugee Only	Woman	Men	Family	Capacity	Cost	Special Notes
Stop 86 86 Madison Avenue	416-922-6532		✓			n/a		- You must be female and between 16 and 25 years old.
Youth Without Shelter	416-748-0110		✓	✓		30		- You must be a single youth between 16 and 24 years old.
OTHER SHELTERS								
Toronto Community Hostel	416-925-4431 Extension 0		✓	✓	✓	n/a		- Singles must apply in person. - Families must apply through Green Field Central Family Intake.
World Vision Reception Centre 43 Christie Street	416-588-9277		✓	✓	✓	n/a		- Serves mainly families. - Families must apply through Green Field Central Family Intake. - Offers a range of settlement services, referrals and assistance with form completion.
LOW COST ACCOMMODATION								
Toronto Budget Hostel 223 Church Street	416-703-3939		✓	✓		n/a	\$18/night	No families.
Global Village Backpackers 460 King St. West	416-703-8540		✓	✓		n/a	\$20/night	No children allowed.
YWCA Woodlawn Hostel 80 Woodlawn Avenue East	416-923-8454		✓			n/a	\$22/night	Women only

Cont....

Shelters and Hostels *Cont....*

Shelter & Address	Telephone	Refugee Only	Woman	Men	Family	Capacity	Cost	Special Notes
Canadiana Backpackers 42 Widmet Street	416-598-9090		✓	✓		n/a	\$25/night	No children allowed.
Hostel International Toronto 76 Church Street	416-971-4440		✓	✓		n/a	\$25/night	Singles only.

Refugee-only Shelters

These shelters serve refugee claimants. They have professional staff who help to receive and support refugee claimants in their first few months in Toronto. Services at these shelters may include healthcare, planning settlement, help with your Personal Information Form (PIF), and counselling. Demand for these shelters is high, so you might not be able to get accommodation at this type of shelter. Even if you are not staying at a refugee-only shelter, you may still be able to make use of their services. For example, a refugee shelter could help you find permanent housing.

Women-only Shelters

These shelters are for women who need a safe place. To ensure the safety of the women who use them, these shelters do not publish their addresses. If you want to stay at one of these shelters, you must phone them to get their address and more information.

Men-only Single Men

These shelters are for men only.

Shelters for Young Adults

These shelters will only take youth. Usually you must be around 16 to 24 years old to apply.

Hostels

If you who can afford to pay between \$18-\$30 (Canadian dollars), you can choose to stay at a hostel while you are looking for permanent accommodation. The prices published in this manual are subject to change. You should phone the hostel to ask how much they charge.

FREE HOT MEALS AND FOOD

Hot meals

There are over 100 places in Toronto where newly arrived refugee claimants can get free hot meals or free food. Most organizations that offer free hot meals provide these on their premises, which means that you have to go there to eat.



Living as a Refugee Claimant in Toronto

Some organisations that offer free hot meals

The following is a list of centres that serve free hot meals on weekdays. These times may change, so you should call first to find out if meals will be served.

ORGANISATION	DAY OF THE WEEK	SERVICE TIMES	LOCATION
Red Cross 416-929 7848	Monday	Lunch: 1-4 p.m.	2 Homewood Ave. (Jarvis St. and Homewood Ave., East of Carlton)
	Wednesday	Supper: 6 p.m.	
Toronto Christian Resource Centre 416-363 4234	Tuesday	Lunch: 12-4 p.m.	40 Oak St. (Parliament St. and Gerrard St.)
	Thursday	Supper: 6 p.m.	
Scott Mission 416-923 8872	Wednesday	Lunch: 12 noon	502 Spadina Ave. (Spadina Ave. and College St.)
	Friday	Lunch: 12 noon	
St John the Compassionate Mission 416-4661357	Monday to Saturday	Bag lunches: 12 noon – 7 p.m.	155 Broadview Ave. (Broadview Ave. and Queen St. E.)
	Thursday	Lunch: 12 noon-1 p.m.	
	Wednesday	Supper: 6 p.m.	

Food banks

Food banks offer free food rations or groceries. If you are not working, you may be eligible for this food.

Food-Link/Hunger Hotline: 416-392-6655

(or 416-397-4634 after hours)

The Food-Link Hotline is a telephone service that refers callers to over 1300

free food programs, including hot meals and food banks. The Hotline is open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7/days a week. Some food banks have a geographical jurisdiction for clients. This means that you have to live in a specific area to benefit from the service. You can call the Food-Link Hotline to find out if you are eligible or to find a food bank in your area.

PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION: MOVING TO YOUR OWN RESIDENCE

Finding longer-term accommodation in Toronto is sometimes very difficult. How much you will have to pay for rent depends on the location and size of the residence. It is usually cheaper to rent an apartment with a friend or relative so that you can share the cost. The cost of utilities – heating, electricity (hydro) and water – is usually included in the rent, but you should always confirm this with your landlord.

If you are single and cannot find people to share an apartment with you, you can rent a room in a rooming house.

Whether you rent an apartment or a room, the landlord usually asks you to pay the "first and last month's rent" before you move in. This gives the landlord protection in case you move out without giving enough notice or if you do not satisfy some lease conditions.

Tips on how to find a residence

- ✓ Look in the classified sections of daily or community newspapers.
- ✓ Call a housing-help agency in your area of interest.
- ✓ Look on bulletin boards in supermarkets, libraries and coin laundry facilities.
- ✓ Look at notices stuck up at bus stops.
- ✓ Talk to your friends, your housing worker and other refugee claimants who are in a similar situation.

✓ Visit other shelters where there may be people from your community who may be looking for someone with whom they can share accommodations.

✓ Phone the City of Toronto Housing Information Service at 416-392-0566 or a City of Toronto Housing Help Centre at one of the numbers below:

City of Toronto Housing Help Centres

Scarborough Housing Help Centre
416-285-8070

North York Housing Help Centre
416-244-0724

East York housing Help Centre
416-424-2900

Etobicoke Housing Help Centre
416-741-1553

**Etobicoke Housing Help Centre,
Satellite Office** 416-653-5400

York Housing Help Centre
416-653-5400

Woodgreen Housing Help Centre
416-469-5211, ext. 1175

Tips on what to consider when looking for a residence

- ✓ Try to find a residence where utilities (heating, lighting and water) are included in the rental amount.
- ✓ Where possible, stay as close a subway station or TTC bus route. This makes travel easier as you work on your refugee claim and other paperwork.
- ✓ Try to find a place that already has a refrigerator and a stove. In Toronto, a refrigerator and a stove are usually included in the rent.



Living as a Refugee Claimant in Toronto

✓ If you are looking for a room in a rooming house, there should be no more than 5 people sharing a bathroom and kitchen.

Your rights and responsibilities as a tenant

A tenant is a person who pays money to live in a residence. When you rent an apartment, you are covered by the Tenant Protection Act, which gives you some rights and some obligations.

Your rights

- You have the right to privacy. This means that your landlord must give you 24 hours written notice before he or she enters your residence, unless it is an emergency or you have agreed to let your landlord in.
- You have the right to have all of the conditions of your lease honoured by your landlord.
- You have the right to stay with your family.
- You have the right to have your home kept in a good state of repair, up to the property standards set by local by-laws, and fire and health codes.
- You have the right to a 6% interest payment on your last month's rent deposit, to be paid to you once every year by the landlord.
- You have the right to be free from harassment by the landlord and/or other tenants.

Your responsibilities

- You are responsible for paying your rent on the day of the month agreed to by you and the landlord.
- You are responsible for honouring the

terms and conditions of your lease. This includes giving your landlord an adequate notice period when you are planning to move.

- You are responsible for not overcrowding your apartment. In the city of Toronto, it is illegal to have more than 5 people sharing one bathroom.
- You are responsible for maintaining your apartment in a reasonably clean and healthy state.
- You are responsible for repairing any damage done by you, your family or your guests.

Telephone service

To get telephone service, call Bell Canada (416-392-2355). It costs about \$50 to have a phone installed. If you haven't received your Social Insurance Number, you might be asked to make a deposit of around \$200. This will be refunded to you after 6 months.

Cable TV service

To get cable TV, call Rogers Cable. You can find them listed in the phone book.

Change of residence

Before you move to a new residence, you must inform the Immigration Office and the Immigration and Refugee Board of your new address in writing. If you do not inform them in writing, you may be violating a condition of your stay in Canada. You might also miss important mail from the Immigration Office. If you are receiving welfare, you must also tell your welfare worker that you are moving. If you don't, you might not get your welfare cheques. You might also be suspended from receiving social assistance.

OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

It's a good idea to open a bank account as soon as you can. Any financial assistance you receive from Social Services can then be deposited directly into your account.

You can open an account at any bank you want. To open an account, you will need two pieces of identification. You can use any two of the following:

- Your immigration identification papers (IMM 1442)
- Your Social Insurance Number card
- Your work permit/authorisation with your photo on it.

When choosing a bank, you should consider:

- Where the bank is located. It is more convenient if your bank is close to where you are staying.
- The bank's hours of operations. Check to make sure that your bank is open at the times that are best suited for you.
- How much the bank charges for its services. All banks charge for their services. Most have many different options, depending on how many cheques you want to write each month, how many withdrawals you usually make, and how much money you will usually keep in your account. If you are not sure what the best option is for you, ask a teller at the bank.
- The type of account you want. This is up to you. For example, if you choose a chequing account, you can pay bills by cheque through your bank account.

Bank cards

When you open your account, you can

also ask for a bank card. You can use your bank card to pay for things directly from your account. You can use your bank card at Automatic Teller Machines (ATM's). These allow you to take money out of your bank account. If you use an ATM that does not belong to your bank, choose one that has a yellow sign with the word "Interac" on it before you use it. If you use an ATM that does not have this sign on it, you will be charged a fee.

Changing banks

If at any time you are not happy with some of the services that are offered at your bank or if you find another bank that better suits your needs, you can always close your account and open an account elsewhere.

The following is a list of the largest banks in the Toronto area. These are only suggestions.

Bank	Main/Biggest Branch
Royal Bank	The Plaza, 200 Bay St. (King St. and Bay St.)
CIBC	Commerce Court (King St. and Bay St.)
Bank of Montreal	100 King Street (King St. and Bloor St.)
TD Canada Trust Bank	1 King Street (King St. and Yonge St.)
Scotiabank	40 King Street West (King St. and Bay St.)

On the lighter side

Being Canadian: The \$1 coin is called a "Loonie" (since it depicts a bird, the loon), and the \$2 coin is called a "Toonie".



Living as a Refugee Claimant in Toronto

GETTING AROUND: PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN TORONTO

Toronto has an efficient public transportation system, commonly referred to as the TTC (Toronto Transit Commission). It consists of buses, streetcars, subways and commuter trains.

Here are a few things you should know about using the public transportation system in Toronto.

- All buses, trains and streetcars have fixed routes. The driver will only stop at designated points.
- If you are not sure how to get where you are going, you can always ask a bus or streetcar driver or a ticket taker at a subway station. You can also ask a bus or streetcar driver to tell you when your stop is coming up.
- When you need to take more than one bus to get to your destination, you must get a 'transfer' slip when you pay your fare. The subway, streetcar and bus are part of the same system so you do not have to pay again when you change from one to the other as long as it is on the same trip. In the subway, you get a 'transfer' from a machine in the subway station. On buses and streetcars, you ask the driver for a 'transfer.'
- When you get on a bus or streetcar, you pay your fare by dropping a ticket, token or exact change into the fare box at the front. The driver does not take your money or make change. You must have the exact fare.
- If you are going to use public transportation every day, it may be cheaper for you

to get a monthly pass. This allows you to ride the public transportation system as often as you want in that month. Student passes cost a little less than adult passes.

RED FLAG



Avoid "Scoopers"

Scoopers are people who take advantage of your lack of knowledge on certain issues to cheat you. Unlicensed passenger vehicles are a good example. They have a reputation for overcharging. In a survey of 60 refugee claimants, two were victims of scoopers. They had paid more than \$100 for a trip that normally costs less than \$30. Scooper drivers often do not have drivers' licences and passenger insurance. This means that you take a big risk when you ride in a scooper.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR MONEY GO FURTHER

Living in Toronto, like in any major city, can be very expensive. But there are many places where you can get free or low-cost goods.

Where to get things for free

Here is a list of places where you can get things for free.

FREE STORE

416-925-8001 or 416-968-1465

For free clothing, shoes, etc.
200 Wellesley St, E. in the basement.
Buzzer #483

Free clothing you can go and pick up

Toronto Adventist Community Services **416 780-1697**

How to apply: Take your identification with you

Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre 416-360-4350

How to apply: Drop in or call in.

Salvation Army Thrift Shops
416-510-8404 or 416-360-6036

How to apply: You must take your immigration papers with you as proof of your status. Clothing is supplied based on the needs of the season (for example, you can get a winter coat in winter). Quantities may be limited per category (e.g., coats, pants, shirts) per person. Most stores serve refugee claimants only on particular days, so you should call before going to the store. Call the number above for a location near you.

Syme-Woolner Neighbourhood and Family Centre 416-766-4634

Conditions: 1 bag of clothing per person

Welcome Baby Support Programme
416-240-1700

How to apply: Call in first.

Women's Drop in 416-864-5557

How to apply: Caters to homeless women and those in hostels/shelters.

Free beds

Sleep Country Canada – 416-242-4774

You can get a free bed from Sleep Country Canada when you give them a referral letter from your shelter or housing worker at your shelter or from some other agency like the Red Cross First Contact program. Sleep Country has a limited number of free beds. These are given out on a 'first come, first served' basis, so it is important to go early. Be sure you have some way to transport your bed or money to pay for the bed to be transported to your place of residence.

Where to go: Sleep Country,
140 Wendell Ave., Unit 2.

How to get there: If you are taking the Yonge line of the subway, get off at York Mills Station and take the Weston Road bus west to Wendell Avenue. If you are taking the University line of the subway, get off at Wilson Station and take the Wilson bus west to Wendell Avenue.

Free furniture

Furniture Bank

Furniture Bank provides free second-hand furniture to help you get started up in your new home. They only serve clients who have a referral letter from a shelter. Talk to your housing worker about getting a referral letter. When you get furniture from the Furniture Bank, you have to arrange to transport it to your home. If you don't have any way to transport it on your own, you can pay to have it delivered.

Where to get things at a low cost

Goodwill Industries, the Salvation Army and the St. Vincent de Paul Society have thrift stores in many locations in Toronto. These sell second-hand clothes, linen, furniture, and toys. Call to find the outlet nearest to where you are staying. Many churches and community organisations can also be a good source of supplies.

Goodwill Industries Shops

Main Store: 234 Adelaide St. E.	416-366-2083
299 Coxwell Ave.	416-465-8569
306 Gerrard St. E.	416-921-3396
2642 Eglinton Ave. E	416-265-4106



Living as a Refugee Claimant in Toronto

3302 Dufferin St. **416-782-3913**

5010 Steeles Ave. W. **416-745-6329**

585 St Clair Ave. W. **416-656-5550**

4075 Dundas St. W. **416-207-9691**

2985 Lakeshore Blvd. W. **416-255-3211**

Salvation Army Thrift Shops 416-510-8404 or 416-360-6036

You can buy many second-hand, low-cost items at Salvation Army Thrift Shops. There are many locations in Toronto. Call one of the phone numbers listed above and ask for the location of the Salvation Army Thrift Shop closest to where you are staying.

St. Vincent de Paul Society Thrift Shops **416-364-5577**

You can buy second-hand clothing and many other items at St. Vincent de Paul Society shops. Call to find the location closest to where you are staying.

Free/low cost communication Voice messaging system

If you do not have a private telephone, you can use Metro Voice Mail to get messages from your friends or family. Here's how it works: you are given your own private telephone number so that you can pick up your messages from any touch-tone phone. At the time this manual was printed, this service only cost \$10 for 3 months!

Where to get Metro Voice Mail

Queen West Community Health Centre **416-703-8480**

Central Neighbourhood House **416-925-4363**

Agincourt Community Services Association **416-321-6912**

Albion Neighbourhood Services **416-741-1553**

The Stop **416-652-7867**

Community Information Centre for the City of York **416-652-2273**

Free Internet access and e-mail

The Toronto Public Library offers free e-mail and Internet access at most of its branches. Service is offered on a 'first come, first served' basis and you usually have to book your time in advance. Some branches let you book your time over the phone. Other branches take bookings only in person.

The Community Access Program (CAP)

CAP is a federal government initiative administered by Industry Canada. It provides access to the Internet in centres in the community. The following are some CAP locations in Toronto.

CAP Locations

LOCATION	HOURS	SERVICES
Central Neighbourhood House 349 Ontario St. (at Parliament St. and Gerrard St.) 416-393-7663	Monday – Friday: 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.	12 computers with Internet and e-mail access.

Cont....

CAP Locations *Cont....*

LOCATION	HOURS	SERVICES
Fred Victor Employment Centre 100 Lombard St. (at Jarvis St. and Queen St. E.) 416-364-8986	Tuesday – Thursday: 12 noon to 8 p.m. Friday: 9.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.	24 computers available for 2-hour sessions; Internet access and typing tutorials.
Times Change Women's Employment Centre 365 Bloor St.#1704 (at Sherbourne St.) 416-927-1900	Monday – Thursday: 9 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.	8 computers available for 30-60 minute sessions. You must register with the centre and call ahead to book computer time.
Regent Park Learning Centre 417 Gerrard St. (at Dundas and Gerrard) 416-363 8025	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday: 3 30pm a.m. to 6 p.m.	20 computers with Internet and e-mail access.

determine the impact that these experiences have on your life.

Unhealthy ways of coping with stress

- Using alcohol or drugs. If you need help because you use drugs or drink excessively, contact an organization like the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (see page 39 for their phone number).

- Avoiding unpleasant activities. For example, postponing your medical exam doesn't solve a problem; it creates a new problem for you to worry about.

- Procrastination. Do not put off for tomorrow what can be done today. Letting priority tasks pile up is a recipe for stress.

- Overeating. A healthy and balanced diet is key to a relaxed mind.

COPING WITH STRESS

What is stress?

Stress is defined as any change that you must adapt to. As a refugee claimant, you will have experienced changes in almost every aspect of your life. You are probably worried about the outcome of your claim, making new friends, finding a job, and so on.

Not all stress is bad. Things that cause stress can be both positive and negative, from the joy of passing your refugee claim hearing to the fear of being in physical danger. Responding to stressful events in a healthy way will

Healthy ways of coping with stress

- Exercise regularly. See below for information on how to find a community resource centre near you.

- Plan your time. Use an agenda or calendar to keep track of everything you have to do. Learn to manage and prioritise events. Don't let events manage your life.

- Make time for yourself. It is so easy to get carried away with responsibilities and activities that you may forget to look after yourself. Make time to take stock of yourself, revisit your ambitions and



Living as a Refugee Claimant in Toronto

goals, and spend some time by yourself.

- Recognize what you can change and what you can't change. For example, no matter what you do, you can't change the date of your hearing. But you can change your attitude toward it by trying not to worry too much.
- Relax. Spend time with friends, attend free shows in your area or just take a walk.
- Explore other ways to manage stress. Contact the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture. You can find out how to contact this organization on page 48. Or speak to a counsellor at a walk in clinic to find out about other relaxation techniques.

Where to get help with stress management

Community Recreation Centres

Getting out, meeting new people and exercising regularly will all help to reduce your stress. A good place to start is your local Community Recreation Centre.

The city of Toronto (Parks and Recreation division) offers physical, social, cultural and recreation activities for all ages, including seniors and people with disabilities.

Special services: Most Community Recreation Centres have programs for adults and children, swimming pools adapted for persons with disabilities, and aerobic classes and weights for those who prefer physical exercise. For information about the programs and locations nearest to you, call: **(416) 392-8207**

Who can attend? Anyone can sign up for programs at a Community Recreation Centre.

Cost: There is a small fee for most programs. If you can't afford the fee, you can apply for help through the City of Toronto Welcome Policy. Ask for an application form at the reception desk of your local Community Recreation Centre. To apply for the Welcome Policy, you will need identification, including confirmation of your address and confirmation of your need for financial assistance (for example, your benefits receipt, pay stubs, or a letter from social service agency or church).

Your social worker

Your social worker has a university degree in social work. Some social workers have taken additional training in psychotherapy. If you have serious problems with stress, ask your social workers to help you find the resources and organizations you need to cope.

Support groups

Everyone needs a support network to rely on in times of need. You should consider joining a social, community, cultural or religious group that includes people who have shared experiences similar to your own or who can understand your situation. Most refugee claimants interviewed in a Red Cross survey said that they found support and strength from a community group. Groups that include people from your homeland are also useful sources of information about the socio-political situation in your country.

Getting the support you need as a refugee claimant in Toronto

As a refugee claimant, you are eligible to apply for a program called "Ontario Works." This is commonly referred to as Social Services or simply Welfare. It will give you financial help for shelter, food and incidental expenses. You can also apply for an allowance for clothing to wear when you start a new job and for education services, such as fees for educational equivalency exams. All decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. Talk to your social worker.

LEGAL AID

You have the right to legal counsel to help you with your refugee claim. If you do not have the money to hire a lawyer, you can apply for Legal Aid. You will be asked for proof of low income. As well, Legal Aid officials must hear your refugee claim in order to decide if you are qualified to receive funding for legal services. They will not assess your credibility for Convention Refugee status.

Finding a good lawyer

There are no set rules for finding a good lawyer. But to ensure you get the best advice possible about your refugee claim, you should:

- Look for a lawyer who is familiar with the situation in your country. You can ask people at community agencies or shelters for suggestions.
- Try to find a lawyer who speaks the language you are most proficient in. This will make it easier for you to communicate with your lawyer without having to use a translator.
- Contact referral agencies, such as those listed in "Referrals to private lawyers." These will give you a list of reputable and approved lawyers to

choose from. You can also ask community organisations and/or friends who may be able to recommend a trustworthy lawyer. It is difficult to change lawyers if you are on Legal Aid, so be certain you are comfortable with a lawyer before making a decision on representation.

Referrals to private lawyers

Lawyer Referral Service of the Law Society of Upper Canada	416-947-3330
African Canadian Legal Clinic	416 214-4747
Refugee Law Office	416 977-8111

Legal Aid

After you have found a lawyer willing to take your case, your next step is to apply for Legal Aid Ontario (usually referred to simply as Legal Aid). The purpose of legal aid is to ensure that people who do not have money to pay a lawyer can still get the legal assistance they need. You can find more information on Legal Aid Ontario at www.legalaid.on.ca.

Qualifying for Legal Aid

Before you can get legal aid, you have to undergo "merit screening." Only people who cannot afford to pay for a lawyer can qualify for legal aid. Merit screening determines if your income is low enough for you to qualify. It has nothing to do with determining the credibility of your refugee claim. Immigration cases are not funded by legal aid if claimants have family members in Canada who would reasonably be expected to help to pay for a lawyer.



Getting the support you need as a refugee claimant in Toronto

If you are found to be eligible for legal aid, you will receive a legal aid certificate. This will allow you to receive legal services from the lawyer of your choice, paid for by Legal Aid.

Applying for Legal Aid: what to take with you.

Take all of your immigration documents with you when you go to apply for legal aid. Be ready to answer general questions relating to your claim.

Where to apply for Legal Aid

You must go to a Legal Aid office in person to apply for legal aid. Legal Aid Ontario has several area offices in Toronto that receive and process client applications and issue legal aid certificates to financially eligible refugee claimants. The following is a list of some offices where you can apply for Legal Aid.

Legal Aid Area Offices

Location	Telephone	Hours
Etobicoke Legal Aid Office 5414 Dundas St. W. (at Kipling Ave. and Dundas St. W.)	416-237-1216	Monday – Thursday: 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 12 noon
North York Legal Aid Office 45 Sheppard Ave. E., Suite 106 (at Yonge St. and Sheppard Ave.)	416-730-1588	Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 3:13 p.m.
North York Legal Aid Office (Finch) Provincial Court, 1000 Finch Ave. W. (at Dufferin St. and Finch Ave. W.)	416-663-5561	Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.
Scarborough Legal Aid Office 1921 Eglinton Ave. E., Unit 1A (at Warden Ave. and Eglinton Ave. E.)	416-750-7172	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Wednesday: 8:30 a.m. – 11 p.m.
Toronto Legal Aid Office (Old City Hall) Old City Hall, 60 Queen St. W., Room 252 (at Bay St. and Queen St. W.)	416-598-0200	Monday –Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Toronto Legal Aid Office (College Park) College Park Provincial Court, 444 Yonge St. (at Yonge St. and College St.)	416-598-1260	Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 12 noon
Toronto Legal Aid Office (Jarvis) Provincial Court, 311 Jarvis St. (at Jarvis St. and Gerrard St. E.)	416-598-0200, ext 4360	Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 12 noon

Community Legal Clinics

You can also get help through a Community Legal Clinic. These clinics provide services that include:

- Summary advice (basic, easy-to-understand advice) and information (generally by telephone or in the course of a brief interview)
- Help for people who are handling their own cases. This help includes substantive legal advice (more in-depth, detailed advice), information about legal procedures, and help in filling out forms and other paperwork important to your claim.
- Full representation by a clinic advocate who may be a lawyer, community legal worker or student.
- Referral to a private practitioner (on a legal aid certificate or on a pro bono basis), duty counsel or community agency.

Community Legal Clinics in the Toronto area

Kensington Bellwood Legal Services 416-924-4244

Community and Legal Aid Services Programme "CLASP" 416-736-5029

Parkdale Community Legal Services 416-531-2411

West Toronto Community Legal Services 416-531-7376

Jane/Finch Community Legal Services 416-398-0677

South Etobicoke Community Legal Services 416-252-7218

York Community Services 416-653-5400

Rexdale Community Legal Clinic
416-745-0062

East Toronto Community Legal Services 416-461-8102

Mississauga Community Legal Services 416-896-2050

Not all legal clinics provide all of the services needed by refugee claimants (for example, helping with documentation, finding a lawyer and accompanying a claimant for a hearing). You should phone a clinic before you visit it to ask what services it offers. While the first five clinics on the list usually provide a full range of services, they are fully booked most of the time.

Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) www.cleo.on.ca

119 Spadina Avenue, Suite 600
416-408-4420

This organization produces material written in plain (non-legal) language specifically for people with low incomes. You can get information on:

- Social assistance,
- Landlord and tenant law,
- Refugee and immigration law,
- Workers' compensation,
- Women's issues,
- Family law,
- Employment insurance, and,
- Human rights.

CLEO does not give legal advice.

Questions & answers

Q: What if I cannot get Legal Aid or get help from a legal clinics and I have no money to pay for a lawyer?

A: There are a number of agencies that can help you prepare your documents

Cont....



Getting the support you need as a refugee claimant in Toronto

Questions & Answers *Cont....*

and get someone to go with you to your hearings. You can visit the Red Cross First Contact drop in centre for more information. First Contact is located at the Red Cross office at 2 Homewood Avenue in Toronto (at the corner of Carlton St. and Jarvis St.). First Contact's phone number is

416-771-9540.

Q: What do I do if I have a problem with my counsel/lawyer?

A: Law societies regulate lawyers. They can investigate complaints against members, impose discipline and provide financial compensation to clients who are victims of negligence or misconduct. If you have a complaint or have reason to believe your lawyer is not representing your interests, contact:

The Law Society of Upper Canada:

416-947-3330

or **Legal Aid:**

416-979-1446

RED FLAG



Beware of immigration consultants

Beware of people who call themselves "representatives" or "immigration consultants" who claim that you will get a visa, obtain citizenship or benefit from special treatment from the Canadian government if you use their services. Citizenship and Immigration Canada is not associated with any representatives.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada treats everyone equally. It does not give preferential service to people with representatives.

The federal government of Canada and the provincial governments do not regulate immigration consultants. Only lawyers who are licensed to practise in Canada can represent you at the Federal Court. If for some reason you feel that you need the services of an immigration consultant, you should call the Better Business Bureau (BBB) to find out if the consultant has a satisfactory rating. An unsatisfactory rating means that people have complained about them and they have failed to respond those complaints.

HEALTH CARE

Until you have been granted Convention Refugee status, you must pay for any health services you receive. If you cannot afford to pay, the Interim Federal Health Program, administered by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, will cover any emergency and essential health services that you may need. This includes:

- treatment and prevention of serious medical/dental conditions (including immunizations and other vital preventative medical care);
- essential prescription medications, and,
- contraception, prenatal and obstetrical care.

After you have been granted Convention Refugee Status, you can apply to be covered by OHIP (the Ontario Health Insurance Program).

An OHIP card lets you get many health services free of charge.

Your health care rights

In Canada you have the right to:

- Choose your own doctor.
- Understand your medical treatment.

If you don't understand what your doctor is telling you, ask.

- Confidentiality. Healthcare workers have to get your permission before they discuss your health with other people.

- Ask for a second opinion. This means that you have the right to ask a second doctor about your condition or about which treatment is best for you.

- Refuse treatment. You cannot be forced to take any treatment or medication that you do not want to take.

Important health services for refugee claimants

Organization	Telephone	Services	Eligibility
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO)	416- 967-2603 or toll free: 1 (800) 268-7096	A non-profit professional association that regulates the practice of medicine in Ontario and protects the public's interest. The CPSO Web site allows you to search online for a doctor in your area. It also explains how patients can make a complaint about a doctor.	
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture 194 Jarvis Street, 2nd Floor	416-363-1066	Provides help with settlement, mental health issues, counselling, and individual and group therapy to survivors of torture or traumatic war experiences.	Anyone who has experienced torture or traumatic war situations, regardless of immigration status.
Fife House 415 Yonge St., Suite 1801 (Yonge St. and Gerrard St. E.)	416-205-9888	Transitional and permanent shared housing for men and women living with HIV/AIDS, 24-hour support and counselling.	Helps only refugee claimants who are homeless, at risk of being homeless or live in sub-standard accommodation.
AIDS Committee of Toronto 399 Church St., 4th floor (Jarvis St. and Carlton St.)	416-340-2437	Help with employment issues, counselling, advocacy and other direct client services.	Anyone affected by or infected with HIV/AIDS.
Women's Health in Women's Hands 2 Carlton St., Suite 500	416-593-7655	Health examinations and counselling in family planning and counselling, abortion counselling, female genital mutilation, breast self-exam and HIV/AIDS prevention; healthy living programmes workshops; and individual counselling.	All women are welcome. Specialises in working with immigrant and refugee women, women with disabilities and women of all ages.

Cont....



Getting the support you need as a refugee claimant in Toronto

Important health services for refugee claimants *Cont....*

Organization	Telephone	Services	Eligibility
Central Toronto Community Health Centres Call to get the location of the community health centre closest to you.	416-703-8480	This is a group consisting of all Community Health Centres in Toronto. Community Health Centres are non-profit organizations that provide primary health and health promotion programs for individuals, families and communities. Most Community Health Centres will make house calls, and some provide health services to those without OHIP coverage.	
Access Alliance Multi-cultural Community Health Centre Call to get the location of the community health centre closest to you.	416-324-8677	Specializes in serving immigrants and refugees in Toronto. Offers educational materials relating to health; helping refugee claimants get access to social, health, legal and cultural services.	Anyone not covered by OHIP.
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health	416-595-6111	A public hospital that provides direct patient care for people with mental health and addiction problems, does research and provides health promotion, education and prevention services.	Anyone not covered by OHIP. Take with you your immigration papers as proof of eligibility to access public health.

EMPLOYMENT

Applying for a work permit/ authorization and/or student permit

You can apply for a work permit/authorization and/or a student work permit/authorization after you have handed in your Personal Information Form and undergone your immigration medical health examination. Your lawyer will normally have the forms you need to apply for a work permit. Your lawyer should be able to help you fill them out and submit them for you. Your application will not be processed until immigration authorities have received the results of your medical examination. If these results delayed

for any reason, or you delay in getting your medical examination, it will take longer to process your application.

To get a student permit, you have to be able to show an acceptance letter from an educational institution.

Question & Answer

Q.: How long does it take to get a work permit?

A.: You can apply for a work permit after you have made your refugee claim and have undergone your Immigration Medical Health Examination. You should get your work permit 3 to 4 weeks after you apply.

Applying for a Social Insurance Number

Before you can work in Canada, you must have a Social Insurance Number (SIN). This is a unique number that is assigned only to you. It comes on a plastic card.

You also need a SIN to obtain other cards, documents and government services. Social Services may also require you to produce a SIN in order to continue receiving financial benefits.

You can apply for your SIN card at any Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) office. When you go to apply, be sure to take with you your immigration papers and any other identification you have. You must provide a valid residential address so that your card can be sent through the mail. You cannot use a shelter address or a post office box.

When you go to your nearest HRDC office to apply for a SIN, you will have to fill out a form. You may also have to undergo a short interview to determine if you know what a SIN card is.

Your SIN card will be sent by mail. Sign the back of the card immediately and keep the card with you. If you lose or destroy the card, you will have to pay a fee to get a replacement card with the same number.

Note: It is illegal to have more than one Social Insurance Number.

Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC): Offices in Toronto

Etobicoke Human Resources Centre Canada

5343 Dundas St. W., Suite 300
416-954-1500

Toronto Centre Human Resources Centre Canada

25 St. Clair Ave. E.,
1st Floor **416-973-6915**

Toronto East - The Danforth Human Resource Centre of Canada

811 Danforth Ave. **416-461-3511**

Toronto Lakeside Human Resources Centre Canada (Dufferin Mall)

900 Dufferin St.,
Suite 0001 **416-583-4700**

Toronto Lawrence Square Human Resources Centre Canada

Lawrence Square Mall,
700 Lawrence Ave. **416-780-4100**

Toronto North Human Resources Centre Canada

3737 Chesswood Dr. **416-954-8700**

Question & Answer

Q.: How long does it take to get a SIN?

A.: Providing you meet all of the criteria for getting a SIN, you should receive your card by mail within three weeks from the date you submit your application. However, you should wait four weeks before enquiring about the status of your card.

Job search and computer resources

Studies and reports on refugee claimants show that this group is usually faced with many barriers to employment. Limited literacy skills in one's own language and/or limited English-language skills often mean that refugee claimants have depend on welfare and social services. If you don't have the information and



Getting the support you need as a refugee claimant in Toronto

resources you need to look for a job, that it also a barrier. The following information should help you get start-

ed on the path to self-reliance and a rewarding career in Canada.

Job search and computer resources for newcomers in Toronto

Organization	Telephone	Services
Community Micro-skills Development Centre Settlement Services	416-247-7181	Job search workshops, resume preparation, networking. Has programs funded by Social Services.
Job Start Employment Resource Centre-Etobicoke South	416-231-2295	8-week pre-employment programme, job search workshops, computer training.
Canadian Arab Federation	416-493-8635	Job search program.
Arab Community Centre	416-231-7746	Document translation, resumes and cover letters.
Accessible Community Counselling and Employment Services (ACCES)	416-921-1800	Job search workshops, resume preparation, job connect programme, employment and vocational counselling.
Catholic Cross Cultural Services	416-757-7010	Job search program, computer training, ESL classes.
Learning Enrichment Foundation	416-769-0830	Industrial skills development, advanced ESL
Skills for Change	416-658-7090	ESL, bookkeeping courses
Tropicana Alternative Youth Centre for Employment	416-491-7000	Job search workshops.
World of Work	416-395-5080	A co-op program for professionals trying to break into the Canadian job market. Involves class and placement modules.
IW Job Placement	416-488-0084	Career planning, employment assistance, outreach to employers.

Cont...

Job search and computer resources for newcomers in Toronto

Organization	Telephone	Services
Woodgreen Community Centre of Toronto	416-462 3110	Employment counselling, resume preparation, job search workshops.
Internet Job Search Resources		
COSTI:	www.costi.org	
Catholic Community services of York Region:	www.ccsyr.org	
Career Solutions:	www.york-net.org/careersolutions	
Settlement Organisation:	www.settlement.org	
Neighbourhood Employment Resource Centre:	www.york-net.org	

Question & Answer

Q: Do I have to do voluntary work?

A.: People do voluntary work for different reasons. If you are a refugee claimant, volunteering can help you get the Canadian experience you need to break into the highly competitive job market. Volunteering is also a good way to use your personal time and your skills to give something back to the community that has welcomed you. Volunteering can help you make new contacts and build your confidence in a new environment. If you are getting financial assistance through Ontario Works, you may also be able to get a monthly travel pass to get to your volunteer assignment and a one-time clothing allowance.

SOCIAL & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Applying for Welfare Assistance/ Ontario Works Benefits

After you have moved out of a shelter and into your own accommodations, you can apply for Welfare Assistance that provides enough money for basic food and incidental expenses. You may also be able to get money from the Community Start-up Program to help pay for the cost of moving. This program gives an allowance that covers the cost of deposits for rent after you have found reasonable accommodation. You will have to get a note of Promise of Address from your prospective landlord. It can also cover fuel or hydro, clothing, furniture and moving costs. You can only use this program once in a twelve-month period.



Getting the support you need as a refugee claimant in Toronto

To apply for welfare assistance, phone the Welfare Office that is nearest to where you are staying and make an appointment for an interview. When you go for your interview, take the following documents with you:

- You immigration papers, and
- Your SIN card, if you have already received it.

Be prepared to spend at least half an hour giving details about your financial situation and need. You must be able to show that you will not be able to survive without help from public funds.

If your application is refused, you will be given a letter explaining the reasons for

the refusal. You can appeal the decision by asking for an internal review of your case. You must do this within 10 days of receiving your decision. For advice on the appeal or the internal review, contact your community legal clinic or Legal Aid.

Where to find to apply for Social Assistance

There are 14 Social Services offices in the City of Toronto. These offices only serve clients who live in certain postal code areas. To find out which office you should contact for welfare assistance, find out the postal code for your new home. Then find the first three letter s/numbers of your postal code in the table below.

Social Services Offices in the City of Toronto

Postal Code	Location	Telephone
M1J, M1K, M1P, M1R	Scarborough West Social Services 1225 Kennedy Rd., Unit F., Scarborough M1P 2L4	general inquiry phone number: 416-392-2800 intake phone number: 416-392-2725
M1B, M1C, M1E, M1G, M1H, M1M, M1N, M1S, M1T, M1V, M1W, M1X	Scarborough North Social Services 5639 Finch Ave. E., Scarborough M1B 5L1	general inquiry phone number: 416-397-1000 intake phone number: 416-397-1010
M2H, M2J, M2K, M2L, M2M, M2N, M2P, M2R, M3A, M3B, M4N, M5M	North York East Social Services 20 Lesmill Rd., North York M3B 2T5	general inquiry phone number: 416-392-2850 intake phone number: 416-392-2811
M3L, M3N, M9L, M9M, M9N	North York West Social Services 1860 Wilson Ave., North York M9M 3A7	general inquiry phone number: 416-392-6500 intake phone number: 416-397-0185
M3H, M3J, M3K, M3M, M6A, M6L	North York Central Social Services 1117 Finch Ave. W., North York M3J 2P7	general inquiry phone number: 416-397-9450 intake phone number: 416-397-9451

Cont...

Social Services Offices in the City of Toronto *Cont....*

Postal Code	Location	Telephone
M1L, M3C, M4A, M4B, M4C, M4G, M4H	East York Social Services 1450 O'Connor Dr Unit 33, North York M4B 2T8	general inquiry phone number: 416-392-3400 intake phone number: 416-392-3421
M4E, M4J, M4L, M4M	East Toronto Social Services 1631 Queen St. E., Toronto M4L 1G4	general inquiry phone number: 416-392-3200 intake phone number: 416-392-3213
M4P, M4R, M4S, M4T, M4V, M5N, M5P, M6B, M6C, M6E, M6H	Central Toronto Social Services 150 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 900, Toronto M4P 3E2	general inquiry phone number: 416-397-1800 intake phone number: 416-397-5100
M4K, M4W, M4X, M4Y, M5A, M5R	Downtown Toronto Social Services 111 Wellesley St. E., Toronto M4Y 3A7	general inquiry phone number: 416-392-5300 intake phone number: 416-392-5100
M6J, M6K, M6R, M6S	High Park/ Parkdale Social Services 1900 Dundas St. W., Toronto M6R 3B6	general inquiry phone number: 416-397-7800 intake phone number: 416-397-7900
M5B, M5C, M5E, M5G, M5H, M5J, M5K, M5L, M5R, M5S, M5T, M5V, M5W, M5X, M6G	Metro Hall Social Services 214 Wellington St. W., Toronto M5V 3C6	general inquiry phone number: 416-392-2600 intake phone number: 416-392-2635
M9R, M9V, M9W	Etobicoke North Social Services 220 Attwell Dr., Unit 4, Etobicoke M9W 6T9	general inquiry phone number: 416-392-6400 intake phone number: 416-392-6405
M6M, M6N, M6P	York/Humber Social Services 605 Rogers Rd., 6th Floor, Toronto M6M 1B9	general inquiry phone number: 416-392-6200 intake phone number: 416-392-6242
M8V, M8W, M8X, M8Y, M8Z, M9A, M9B, M9C, M9P	Etobicoke South Social Services 779 The Queensway, Etobicoke M8Z 1N4	general inquiry phone number: 416-392-6550 intake phone number: 416-397-0330



Getting the support you need as a refugee claimant in Toronto

EDUCATION

Academic Equivalency

Most employers will accept and recognize foreign educational credentials as long as they are considered acceptable by a recognized Canadian educational institution. It is up to you to get obtain an equivalent certificate or assessment documentation. This will prove that the education you received outside of Canada has been assessed and has been found to be equivalent to a certain level of education and/or a certain degree at a recognized Canadian institution.

The level of assessment differs, depending on what you need it for. For example, if you need it for work purposes, it should normally take about two weeks. If you need it to get accepted at a Canadian school, college or university, it takes longer. This is because a course-by-course comparison and assessment has to be made.

There are a number of institutions that do this type of assessment. Each one charges a fee. Fees range from \$80-\$150. The average cost is \$100. If you don't have enough money to pay for an assessment, speak to your social services worker. You may qualify for financial assistance to cover the cost of this fee.

The following institutions do academic assessments.

Academic Credentials Evaluation Service **416-736-5787**

Office of Admissions
York University
4700 Keele Street
North York, Ontario M3J 1P3

Comparative Education Service

416-978-2185

University of Toronto
315 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A3

World Education Services (WES)

Canada **416-972-0070**

45 Charles Street East, Suite 700
Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1S2

Professional qualifications

In order to work at a licensed trade or profession in Canada, all foreign-trained professionals need a formal confirmation that their foreign credentials meet Canadian standards.

You can find more information on how to get this confirmation by visiting the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials Web site at www.settlement.org.

Language training

English as Second Language (ESL) classes

ESL classes help new Canadians learn, improve or perfect their English speaking, writing and reading skills. They also equip adults who have little or no English with the language skills to find a job in Toronto. Some locations offer specialised ESL programmes, for example, pronunciation. If you have specific needs, ask if there are classes to meet those needs.

ESL classes are free if you are staying at a shelter or receiving welfare assistance.

To register for ESL classes, you first have to book an appointment at an assessment centre to have your competency in English assessed. This will

determine what level of ESL classes will help you the most -- beginner, intermediate, advanced or TOEFL (Test of English as First Language).

When you go to your assessment, you will need:

- Your immigration papers, to confirm your refugee status;
- Or an acknowledgement of Intent to Claim Refugee Status documents.

Who to Contact for an Assessment

To book an appointment for an assessment, or to get more information about ESL classes and class locations in your area, please contact your local assessment centre.

Toronto District Board of Education Assessment Centres/Offices

East Toronto **416-396-6909**
140 Borough Drive, Scarborough
When to call: Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. and 12 noon.

North Toronto **416-395-8080**
5050 Yonge Street, North York
When to call: Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

South Toronto **416-397-3827**
155 College Street, Toronto
When to call: Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Toronto West **416-394-7100**
1 Civic Centre Court, Ground Floor, Etobicoke
When to call: Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

First Contact

First contact staff would be happy to provide you with information on eligi-

bility and the ESL classes located near where you stay.

416-771-9540

2 Homewood Avenue, Toronto (at the corner of Carlton St. and Jarvis St.)

OTHER TYPES OF HELP: NGOs that can help refugee claimants

There are many community agencies and non-governmental agencies that can help you with processing your claim. These range from ethno-based community agencies to non-profit organisations. Choose one from the list below that you feel comfortable with.

Amnesty International

56 Temperance St., 8th Floor (near Bay St. and Queen St. W.)
Toronto, ON M5H 3V5

416-363-9933

Services: Advocacy on behalf of prisoners of conscience and political refugees. Has a refugee network program and library open to the public with information on human rights violations in specific countries.

Advocacy Centre for the Elderly

2 Carlton St., Toronto, ON M5B 1J3

416-598-2656

Services: Advocacy for people 60 years and older. Offers referral services for refugee claimants. Also handles non-immigration-related cases of abuse. For example, if a relative who handles your finances for you is using your funds for their own benefit or if you are living with a person who is mistreating you physically or verbally, you may be eligible for assistance. The age limit can be waived in deserving circumstances.



Getting the support you need as a refugee claimant in Toronto

Refugee and Immigrants Information Centre Toronto Inc

597 Parliament St., Suite B4
Toronto, ON M4X 1W3

416-961-7027

Services: Helps with the refugee claim process. Also helps failed claimants in the appeal/judiciary review process. Conducts ESL classes, translation services. Offers immigration and para-legal services like help with Personal Information Files and Human Rights applications.

Support agencies for your refugee determination process

You can call these organizations for help and information.

Salvation Army. Immigrant and Refugee Services Centre

416-360-6036

Services: Settlement services, orientation, information and referral, including referrals to other Salvation Army programs that provide material assistance and shelter, help with filling out forms and ESL classes.

St Christopher House

416-532-4828

Services: Employment, housing help, language training and counselling services. Has offices around the city. Call for the location nearest you.

COSTI

416-658-1600

Services: Provides educational, social, and employment assistance, and emergency shelter.

Centre Francophone du Toronto Métropolitain

416-203-1220

Services: Caters to Toronto's French-speaking population. Helps with orientation, settlement, information and referrals. Also seeks to promote the human, cultural and community linkages within the francophone population in Toronto.

South Asian Women's Centre

416-537-2276

Services: Provides employment services, food, housing, housing help, language training and legal services to South Asian women.

Roma Community and Advocacy Centre

416-588-6288

Services: Settlement assistance and help with the refugee to Roma (Gypsies).

Centre for Spanish Speaking People

416-533-8545

Services: Serves new immigrants from 22 countries and other members of a very diverse Spanish-speaking community. Services include settlement information, translation of official documents, interpretation in interviews and by telephone, affidavits and legal advice.

Culture Link

416-588-6288

Services: Orientation and workshop facilitation. Has referral services and offers volunteer opportunities for new immigrants, including refugee claimants. Currently working on a Newcomer Youth Centre project.

Assaulted Women's Helpline

416-863-0511

Services: 24-hour crisis counselling, support and information. Provides referrals to shelters, legal, health, counselling and ethno-specific resources.

Catholic Cross Cultural Services (CCS)
416-324-8225

Services: Centre for information and referral. Runs periodic workshops on refugee and immigration issues, free Internet and computer access. CCS also offers language, employment and support services for women.

Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture
416-363-1066

Services: Offers mental health, counselling, individual and group therapy to survivors of torture or traumatic war experiences, regardless of immigration status.

Canadian Refugee and Immigrant Counselling Services (CRICS)
416-506 1163

Services: Provides culturally sensitive trauma counselling, mental health services and life management support services to refugees and immigrants. Counsellors have special training in pre-immigration trauma, the migration process and post immigration difficulties. Individual counselling is available. All services are free of charge, but you must call to make an appointment.

Quaker Committee for Refugees
416-964-9669

Services: Information referral, counselling, welfare and help with filling out forms.

Dixie-Bloor Neighbourhood Centre
905-629-1873

Services: Offers services in Russian and Ukrainian. Dixie-Bloor Neighbourhood House is a community centre that provides settlement and document translation services. Also

has employment support programmes and co-ordinates volunteer work for adults and youth.

Ethno-Specific NGOs

Afghan Association

416-744-9289

Services: Deals primarily with landed immigrants, but also provides referral services, such as referrals to emergency shelters, to refugee claimants.

Canadian African Newcomer Aid
416-658-8030

Services: Offers an integrated program for refugee claimants that includes information sessions, housing, computer program and a program for the elderly.

African Refugee and Immigrant Aid Organisation
647-436-7520

Services: Settlement services, advocacy, information and referral, interpretation and translation, assistance in accessing services for foreign-trained professionals and trades people.

The Arab Community Centre of Toronto (ACCT)
416-231-7746

Services: Offers a range of settlement services to the Arab community. Holds job search workshops and has a program for community volunteers.

Canadian Ukrainian Immigrant Aid Society
416 767 4595

Services: Provides basic settlement services for refugee claimants and helps with filling out papers.



Getting the support you need as a refugee claimant in Toronto

Chinese Information and Community Services

416-203-1220

Services: Offers referral and information services in Chinese and English.

Afghan Women's Counselling and Integration Community Support Organisation

416-588-3585

Services: Provide referral services and can help with identifying a lawyer. Also assists with filling out papers.

Jamaican Canadians Association

416-746-5772

Services: Mainly provides referrals to other programs. Also helps with job search skills and access to educational opportunities.

Tamil Eelan Society of Canada

416-463-7647

Services: Mainly serves Sri-lankans but also assists Indians and Pakistanis who are Tamil. Specialist services include settlement information, job search assistance and a Woman Aiding Woman programme.

Kababayan Community Centre

416-532-3888

Services: Provides computer classes and has an orientation programme for newcomers to Canada.

Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto

416-699-4527

Services: Offers an orientation programme with Spanish, Italian, French, and Croatian translation. Has in-group parenting program. Provides help with obtaining Legal Aid and counselling services.

Midayanta Association of Somali Service Agencies

416-922-0392

Services: Offers settlement services in Somali and English. Monitors sponsorship and immigration cases. Conducts orientation sessions and has a housing assistance programme.
