



SPACE FOR CHANGE

**NEWCOMER SETTLEMENT**

# RESOURCE GUIDE

LGBTQ+ Refugees and Newcomers

## **Registration for New to Canada settlement services is temporarily unavailable.**

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

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

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

We appreciate your understanding.

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

The 519 Newcomer Settlement Team

**THE 519  
PROGRAMS AND  
SERVICES**



# THE 519: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

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

## EarlyON Child and Family Centre

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

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

- 🌐 [The519.org/eon](https://The519.org/eon)
- ✉️ [Glitterbug@The519.org](mailto:Glitterbug@The519.org)

## Trans Programs

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



## 2SLGBTQ+ Youth Programs

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

- ✉️ [YouthPrograms@The519.org](mailto:YouthPrograms@The519.org)
- 🌐 [The519.org/youth](https://The519.org/youth)


# THE 519: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

## Recurring Programs

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

## 2SLGBTQ+ Older Adults Programs

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

 [The519.org/oap](https://The519.org/oap)



## The 519 Legal Clinic




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

Programs available:

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

Legal Advice Clinics - Free one-time 30-minute legal advice consultations in the following areas of law:

Criminal Law, Employment Law, Family Law, Housing Law, Immigration & Refugee, Wills & Estates & General Clinic (human rights, experienced violence, income security)

-  [The519.org/a2j](https://The519.org/a2j)
-  [LegalClinic@The519.org](mailto:LegalClinic@The519.org)
-  [TransIDClinic@The519.org](mailto:TransIDClinic@The519.org)



# THE 519: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

## Housing Support

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

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

[FollowUp@Toronto.ca](mailto:FollowUp@Toronto.ca)



-  [The519.org/housing](https://www.the519.org/housing)
-  416-392-6874 ext. 4005

Find all our programs at  
[www.the519.org/programs/](https://www.the519.org/programs/)

## Education and Training

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

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

-  [Training@The519.org](mailto:Training@The519.org)
-  [The519.org/education-training](https://www.the519.org/education-training)



# RESOURCES FOR NEW TO CANADA COMMUNITIES



# SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION SERVICES

## **Access Alliance**

Location: Scarborough

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

- Phone: 416-324-8677
- Website: [accessalliance.ca](http://accessalliance.ca)

## **Rainbow Connect**

Location: Toronto

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

- Phone: 416-824-3726
- Email: [nicholas.manyan@tngcs.org](mailto:nicholas.manyan@tngcs.org)
- Website: [tngcommunityto.org](http://tngcommunityto.org)

## **Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto (MCC Toronto)**

Location: Toronto

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

- Phone: +1 416-406-6228 ext 125
- Email: [refugeepeersupport@mcctoronto.com](mailto:refugeepeersupport@mcctoronto.com)
- Website: [mcctoronto.com](http://mcctoronto.com)

## **Hope for Refugees**

Location: Toronto

Services: Offers specialized peer-to-peer support and legal and advocacy services.

- Phone: Email: [info@hopeforrefugees.org](mailto:info@hopeforrefugees.org)
- Website: <https://hopeforrefugees.org/>

## **FCJ Refugee Centre**

Location: Toronto

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

- Phone: +1 416-469-9754
- Website: [fcjrefugeecentre.org](http://fcjrefugeecentre.org)

# SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION SERVICES

## **Matthew House Toronto**

Location: Toronto

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

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

## **The Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples**

Location: Toronto

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

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

## **Centre Francophone du Grand Toronto**

Location: Toronto

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

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

## **CultureLink**

Location: Toronto

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

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

## **Black CAP (Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention)**

Location: Toronto

Services: HIV and health support services, including those for LGBTQ+ refugees.

- Phone: (416) 977-9955, ext. 250
- Email: nscoordinator@black-cap.com
- Website: blackcap.ca



# SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION SERVICES

## **Marginalized Majority Collective**

Location: Toronto

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

- Phone: +1 437-246-7309
- Email: [marginalizedmajoritycollective@gmail.com](mailto:marginalizedmajoritycollective@gmail.com)

## HOUSING AND SHELTER SUPPORT

### **Fife House**

Location: Toronto

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

- Phone: +1 416-205-9888
- Email: [info@fifehouse.org](mailto:info@fifehouse.org)

### **Maggie's Toronto**

Location: Toronto

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

- Phone: +1 416-964-0150
- Email: [info@maggiesto.org](mailto:info@maggiesto.org)
- Website: [maggiesto.org](http://maggiesto.org)

### **Christie Refugee Welcome Centre**

Location: Toronto

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

- Email: [general@christiestreetc.com](mailto:general@christiestreetc.com)
- Phone: 416-588-9277

### **Emergency Shelters**

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

# HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

## **Better Life Counselling**

Location: Toronto

Services: Professional mental health support and counseling services.

- Phone: +1 416-859-6917
- Website: [betterlifecounselling.com](http://betterlifecounselling.com)

## **Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT)**

Location: Toronto

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

- Phone: +1 416-363-1066 / Toll-Free: 1-877-292-2288
- Website: [ccvt.org](http://ccvt.org)

## **Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services**

Location: Toronto

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

- Phone: +1 416-324-8677
- Email: [talktous@accessalliance.ca](mailto:talktous@accessalliance.ca)
- Website: [accessalliance.ca](http://accessalliance.ca)

## **Sherbourne Health – Mental Health Counselling**

Location: Toronto

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

Contact:

- Phone: +1 416-324-4100
- Website: [sherbourne.on.ca](http://sherbourne.on.ca)

## **WoodGreen Community Services**

Location: Toronto

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

- Phone: +1 416-645-6000
- Email: [info@woodgreen.org](mailto:info@woodgreen.org)

# SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES

## **Planned Parenthood Toronto (PPT)**

Location: Toronto

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

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

## **Hassle-Free Clinic**

Location: Toronto

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

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

## **People with AIDS Foundation (PWA)**

Location: Toronto

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

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

## **Asian Community AIDS Service (ACAS)**

Location: Toronto

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

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

## **AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT)**

Location: Toronto

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

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

# COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

## **FrancoQueer**

Location: Toronto

Services: Support and services for French-speaking community.

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

## **Rainbow Connect**

Location: Toronto

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

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

## **LesBond: Asian Queer Women Migrants Support Project**

Location: Toronto

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

- Email: lesbondinfo@gmail.com

## **Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention (Black CAP)**

Location: Toronto

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

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

## **Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP)**

Location: Toronto

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

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

## **Latinos Positivos**

Location: Toronto

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

- Website: latinospositivos.ca

## ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) SERVICES

### **YMCA of Greater Toronto**

Location: Toronto

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

- Phone: +1 416-925-5462
- Website: [ymcagta.org](http://ymcagta.org)

### **Newcomer Women's Services Toronto**

Location: Toronto

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

- Phone: +1 647-639-5587
- Website: [newcomerwomen.org](http://newcomerwomen.org)

## FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (FSL) SERVICES

### **YMCA of Greater Toronto**

Location: Toronto

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

- Phone: +1 416-502-2484
- Website: [ymcagta.org](http://ymcagta.org)

### **Collège Boréal**

Location: Ontario (Multiple Locations)

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

- Phone: +1 1-800-361-6673 / +1 416-289-5130
- Website: [collegeboreal.ca](http://collegeboreal.ca)

# YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES

## **Supporting Our Youth (SOY)**

Location: Toronto

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

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

## **Friends of Ruby**

Location: Toronto

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

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

## **LGBTQ+ Youth Line**

Location: Ontario-wide (Virtual)

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

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

## **The Studio at Lumenus**

Location: Toronto

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

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

## **LGBT YouthLine**

Location: Ontario-wide (Virtual)

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

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

# CRISIS SUPPORT AND HELPLINES

## **Assaulted Women's Helpline**

Location: Ontario-wide

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

- Phone: +1 416-863-0511
- Toll-Free: 1-866-863-0511 / 1-866-863-7868
- Website: [awhl.org/online-chat](http://awhl.org/online-chat)

## **Canada Suicide Prevention Service**

Location: Canada-wide

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

- Phone: 1-833-456-4566
- Text: 45645
- Website: [crisisservicescanada.ca](http://crisisservicescanada.ca)

## **Talk 4 Healing**

Location: Ontario (for Indigenous women)

Services: Culturally sensitive crisis support for Indigenous women.

- Phone: 1-855-554-4325
- Chat: [talk4healing.com/need-help](http://talk4healing.com/need-help)

## **Trans Lifeline**

Location: Canada

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

- Phone: 877-330-6366
- Website: [translifeline.org](http://translifeline.org)

## **Good2Talk**

Location: Ontario

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

- Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Text: GOODTOTALKON to 686868
- Website: [good2talk.ca](http://good2talk.ca)

## CRISIS SUPPORT AND HELPLINES

### Gerstein Crisis Centre

Location: Toronto

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

- Phone: +1 416-929-5200
- Website: [gersteincentre.org](http://gersteincentre.org)

### Distress Centres of Greater Toronto

Location: Toronto

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

Phone: +1 416-408-4357

Text: 45645

Website: [torontodistresscentre.com](http://torontodistresscentre.com)

### Important Numbers for the City of Toronto

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

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

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

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

## SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT SERVICES

### Toronto Rape Crisis Centre/Multicultural Women Against Rape

Location: Toronto

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

Contact:

- Phone: +1 416-597-8808
- Website: [trccmwar.ca](http://trccmwar.ca)



## **GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

### **Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)**

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

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

IRCC Call Centre: 1-888-242-2100

Website: [www.ircc.canada.ca](http://www.ircc.canada.ca)

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

### **Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)**

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

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

Website: [www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca](http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca)  
Office hours: 8 am – 4 pm, Monday to Friday

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

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

# **YOUR REFUGEE CLAIM PROCESS**



## WHAT IS 2SLGBTQ+?

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

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

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



## WHAT IS SOGIE?

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

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



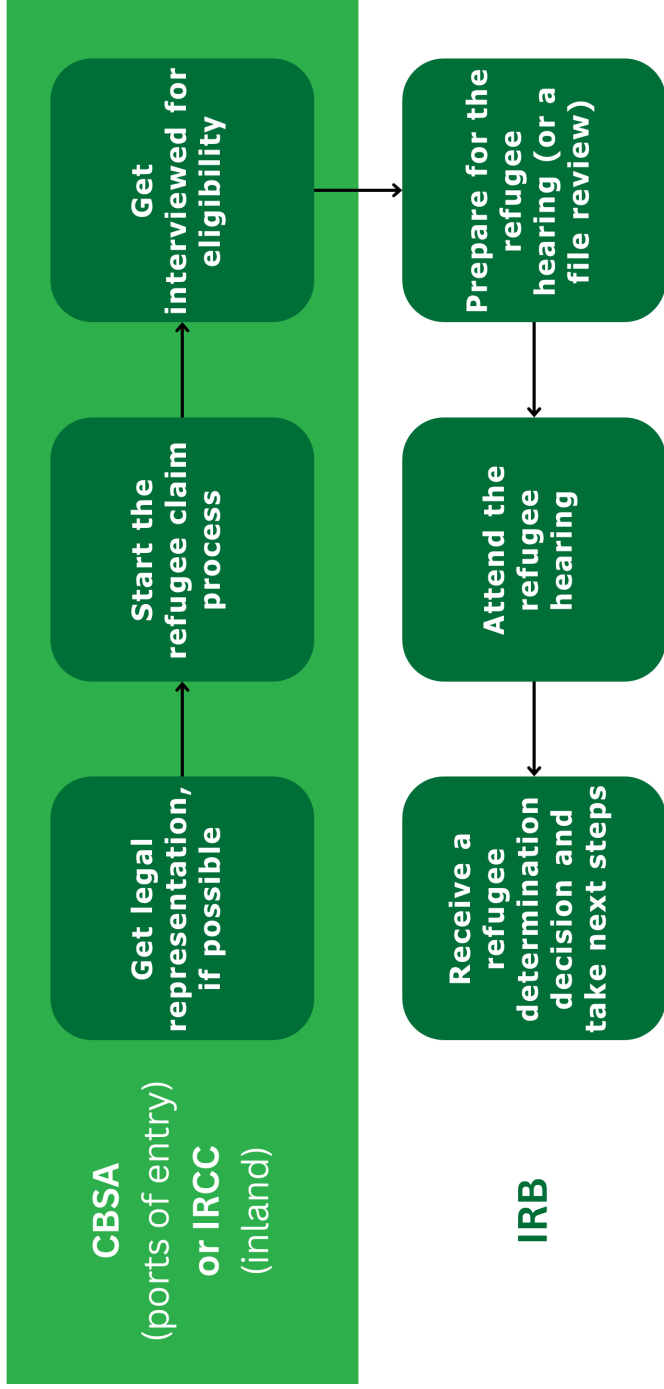
## THE REFUGEE CLAIM PROCESS

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

Other resources include:

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

# JOURNEY MAP OF THE REFUGEE CLAIM PROCESS



# ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO HELP YOUR REFUGEE CLAIM

## 1

### GET INFORMED

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

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

## 2

### GET CONNECTED

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

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

## 3

### GET PREPARED

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

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

# IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE LAWYERS

## **Battista Migration Law Group**

416-203-2899

reception@migrationlawgroup.com

## **Rebeka Lauks**

647-805-3550

rebeka@laukslaw.com

## **Ashley Fisch**

647-805-0750

afisch@afalawyers.ca

## **Eric Chang**

647-805-0750 x102

echang@afalawyers.ca

## **Kareem Ibrahim**

1-877-618-9861

kareem@kareemibrahimlaw.ca

## **Mary Akhbari**

416-668-1103

akhbarilawoffice@gmail.com

## **Daniel Radin**

416-553-7890

danielradinlaw@gmail.com

## **El-Farouk Khaki**

416-925-7227

info@elfaroukhhaki.ca

## **Aadil Mangalji**

416-850-7167

aadil@imlawgroup.com

## **Carlos Vera**

carlosvlaw@gmail.com

## **Christian Julien**

416-988-8853

cjulien@kingwelllaw.com

## **Lewis and Associates**

416-924-2227

hello@lewislegal.ca

## **Adrienne Smith**

647-365-1895 or 647-365-1801

smith@smithimmigrationgroup.com

## **Anisha Nag**

416-300-2211

anisha@anishanaglaw.com

## **Alex Verman**

365-605-5810

lawyer@alexverman.com

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## **Legal Aid Ontario**

416-979-1446

www.legalaid.on.ca

## **Refugee Law Office**

416-977-8111

## **Law Society of Ontario**

416-947-3300

416-644-4886

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS





## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is the processing time for the Refugee Claim Process?**

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

### **How do I get a lawyer or legal representative?**

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

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

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

### **When will I get my decision?**

After your refugee hearing, the IRB Member will:

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

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

### **Can I work?**

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

### **How do I get a SIN?**

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

Information on the application process can be found at [www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin.html).

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

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **How do I get a work permit?**

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

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

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

### **When will I get my decision?**

After your refugee hearing, the IRB Member will tell you their decision immediately, or send their decision in the mail. There is no standard time for a Member to make their decision. If your decision is delayed, it does not mean your refugee claim will be denied.

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

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

### **What is IFHP?**

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

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **How do I know if I am eligible for IFHP?**

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

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

### **What is Ontario Works (OW)?**

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

### **What is the Immigration Medical Examination?**

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

Only certain doctors may perform these medical exams.

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

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

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

### **How do I contact IRCC?**

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

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

**New to Canada**  
**Support for Refugees and Newcomers**

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