



Ontario Coalition of Service
Providers for Refugee Claimants



FCJ Refugee Centre

Walking With Uprooted People

Response to COVID-19

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Walking With Uprooted People

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**Ontario Coalition of Service
Providers for Refugee Claimants**

HOW TO GET HELP: RESPONSE TO COVID -19

The Coalition of Service Providers for Refugee Claimants continues to work in solidarity with every person in need of protection, particularly those seeking or having received Canadian protection. We recognize that these populations experience increased vulnerability as racialized and marginalised persons. With the health and safety of our entire community in mind, coalition agencies are making adjustments to our daily operations.

Coalition agencies will continue to offer essential services such as: provision of food (if applicable), shelter/housing and/or social services and other necessities of life to disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals. Agencies will be limiting in-person services to those deemed essential where no other options are available.

We will opt for phone, email, video conference and other remote options as available. Our intake and appointment priorities will take into account the operational adjustments and deadline flexibilities of the relevant government institutions (Immigration and Refugee Board, CBSA, IRCC, etc).

All in person information sessions and workshops have been cancelled until further notice.

We thank you for your patience at this time and look forward to continuing to work together in solidarity with uprooted people and our local communities.



Ontario Coalition of Service
providers for Refugee Claimants

WHO ARE WE?

The Coalition includes
refugee houses and
agencies who work with
vulnerable populations
across Southern On-
tario and 2 in the
United States



HOW COVID-19 IS IMPACTING IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROCEDURES

Starting March 16, 2020, all refugee in-person appointments are cancelled until April 13, 2020. To know when they will resume services and to get up-to-date information, see IRCC's special measures to help clients affected by COVID—19.

HOW TO MAKE A REFUGEE CLAIM INLAND UNDER COVID 19 INSTRUCTIONS

In land claims are still available; however, the process has changed:

- All in-person claims are closed
- The Immigration office (IRCC) located at 5343 Dundas St. Etobicoke, is currently closed to the public
- The only way to start an inland claim process is by contacting Immigration by email.
- If you are in need of protection and you are currently living in Ontario, please contact one of the service providers listed above or call Legal Aid.

REFUGEE CLAIMANTS AT ANY AIRPORT ALLOWING INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

CBSA has in place protocols to assess and screen people for symptoms. They give to people making claims without symptoms the same advice as other travellers regarding self-isolation. If they have symptoms, they are referred to PHAC. CBSA would begin the refugee claim process administratively. IFH coverage would be initiated.

CBSA was still (as of 19 March) doing eligibility interviews (unlike IRCC).

REFUGEE CLAIMS AT ANY USA/CANADA BORDER ARE CANCELLED

On March 20, 2020, Canada and the US also announced collaborative and reciprocal measures where we will now be returning irregular migrants who attempt to cross anywhere at the Canada–US border, including those who attempt to make an asylum claim at a land POE.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-special-measures.html>



HOW TO APPLY FOR LEGAL AID

All Legal Aid applications are done over the phone. The Client Centre is open from 8:00 to 5:00 from Monday to Friday to receive applications. Calling earlier in the morning is recommended to reduce waiting time.

To make an application call Toll free #: 1 800-668-8258



HOW COVID-19 IS IMPACTING IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROCEDURES

Legal Aid # (Toronto only): 416-979-1446

Every time you apply, you will speak to two different agents. The first agent will ask you more basic questions and set up your Legal Aid account. At the end of the call, they will give you a client number. Write this number down. They will then transfer you to a second agent who may ask you more personal questions related to the reason for your refugee claim and your finances.

After that conversation, two things could happen:

- A. If the agent determines that you're financially eligible to receive legal aid, they will usually give you a certificate number at the end of the call.
- B. If no certificate number at the end of the phone call, you may be required to provide additional information related to your financial situation (e.g. sending a copy of your bank statement), and they will not give you a certificate number until they receive this information.

Legal Aid Online Portal

- a. If you provided Legal Aid with an email, after issuing the certificate, Legal Aid will send you an email with a link to the Legal Aid Online Portal. They will also give you a PIN on the phone, which you'll need to use to set up your account in the portal. Write this number down. Click the link in the email to confirm your email address. You will then be sent a second email with a link to the portal and login information. Wait 24 hours after receiving this email, then click the link and set up your online account. In your account, under My Documents, you will find a Consent & Declaration form that you must sign electronically. If you don't do this within three weeks, your account may become inactivated.
- b. If you do not provide legal aid with an email, they will mail you the Consent & Declaration form, which you have to sign and fax back to Legal aid. The fax number is in the mail you get.

After you have received the Legal Aid certificate number, you must find a lawyer willing to accept Legal Aid. You must give the lawyer your certificate numbers, so they can receive payment from Legal Aid. Only give a lawyer your certificate number once you're certain you'd like to work with them, as it is extremely difficult to switch lawyers after one has registered with Legal Aid.

If you need information to apply for legal aid and/or an example of a Legal Aid questionnaires, follow the FCJ Refugee Centre guidelines at FCJ Refugee Centre website:

<https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/LEGAL-AID-questionnaire-guide.pdf>



HOW COVID-19 IS IMPACTING IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROCEDURES

CBSA REGARDING DETENTIONS

The Canadian Council for Refugees has repeatedly urged, and continues urging CBSA to get people out of immigration detention. CBSA's only step taken so far has been to establish measures to identify people with symptoms and to minimise risk of transmission in detention, including ending visits (except counsel).

CBSA IN-PERSON REPORTING

Regions are making their own arrangements for people to call in, rather than appearing in person.

CBSA REGARDING REMOVALS

Starting March 20th, removals are suspended for the next 3 weeks. CBSA clarified that removals could proceed exceptionally where:

- Person wants to voluntarily leave
- Person presents serious inadmissibility, but it needs to be approved by Headquarters (and depends whether they can find routing, commercial flights.)

EXEMPTIONS RE: TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

Exemptions to the air travel restrictions to enter Canada will apply to foreign nationals who have been already committed to work, study or making Canada their home approved as Permanent Resident, and travel by these individuals will be considered essential travel.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2020/03/canada-provides-update-on-exemptions-to-travel-restrictions-to-protect-canadians-and-support-the-economy.html>

TEMPORARY EXTENTION OF TIME FOR SUBMITTING THE BASIS OF CLAIM FORM (BOC FORM) TO THE IRB

The BOC Form for claims made at a port of entry should usually be submitted to the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) no later than 15 days after the day the claim was referred by CBSA. If your time limit for filing the BOC Form at the IRB falls between February 15 and April 15, 2020 inclusive, the deadline is extended to May 30, 2020. <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/legal-policy/procedures/Pages/rpd-covid19.aspx>



HOW COVID-19 IS IMPACTING IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROCEDURES

DIFFERENT TIMELINES FOR NOTICE OF APPEAL, PERFECTING AN APPEAL BEFORE THE IRB-REFUGEE APPEAL DIVISION

If your time limit for filing a notice of appeal or perfecting the appeal falls between January 1, 2020 and April 15, 2020 inclusive, the deadline is extended to May 30, 2020.

<https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/legal-policy/procedures/Pages/rad-covid19.aspx>

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD SUSPENSION OF ALL IN-PERSON HEARINGS

The IRB is extending the suspension of all in-person hearings (including refugee hearings) and mediations until at least Monday, May 4th. Postponed in-person hearings and mediations will be rescheduled promptly. The IRB will continue to monitor this and updates will be provided as needed.

<https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/news/2020/Pages/covid-19-march20.aspx>



IMPLICATIONS OF TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS: COMMON QUESTIONS

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-special-measures.html>

Content:

What are the air travel restrictions?

How does the government define “immediate family member” under these restrictions?

What are the land travel restrictions?

What are the air travel exemptions?

What are the land travel exemptions?

Will I be allowed to re-enter Canada if I am a permanent resident?

Will I be able to remain in Canada if I am already in the country legally?

Can a foreign national with a valid visa or electronic travel authorization (eTA) but no study or work permit come to Canada?

I have been approved for permanent residence but haven't landed; can I still come?

Are you continuing to process and accept applications?

What is the impact on your processing times?

What happens to people trying to apply for temporary or permanent status in Canada?



HOW COVID-19 IS IMPACTING IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROCEDURES

What should foreign nationals who are in Canada with valid temporary status as a visitor, worker or student do if their status is about to expire?

What is the impact on temporary foreign workers?

What is the impact of the restrictions on international students?

What about international students who are concerned about restrictions on distance learning to be able to apply for a post-graduation work permit?

When will the exemptions be in place? Should people being exempt rush to Canada immediately?

What is the impact on refugees and asylum claimants?

What about our domestic IRCC operations?

Are you suspending immigration loan payments for refugees?



RESOURCES AVAILABLE UNDER COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS AND MODIFICATION

HOW TO GET HEALTH SUPPORT

On March 20, 2020 the Ministry of Health, in its memorandum to Ontario Hospitals and Ontario Health (Local Health Integration Networks), addressed the provision of necessary medical services in hospitals to persons who do not have health insurance under OHIP or another provincial health insurance plan. The Ministry of Health stated: “is committed to ensuring that all people in Ontario receive medically necessary health care during the COVID-19 outbreak. To this end, and until further notice, the Ministry requests hospitals provide all medically necessary services to all persons who present at a hospital, regardless of whether the person presents a valid OHIP card, or does not have health insurance under OHIP or another provincial health insurance plan.”



Prior to this, the Ministry of Health waived the three-month waiting period for Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) coverage in order to ensure that anyone in need of care can receive it. Furthermore, Ontario will cover the cost of COVID-19 services for uninsured people who do not meet the criteria for OHIP coverage.

Access to health care for uninsured patients during COVID-19 in Toronto: a brief guide for health care and social service providers:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1my-TUUD7E9BexPOivdudz-Sma6kqEilh/view>

If you're experiencing COVID 19 like symptoms, please contact your primary care provider or Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or use the following links:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>

https://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2020/03/ontario-expands-coverage-for-care.html?utm_source=ondemand&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=p&fbclid=IwAR26Jup8SrGCbTj8Xndusd4eu9uUsc18iq-uHyJIpJu4_VZSDNuQav5jeZg



RESOURCES AVAILABLE UNDER COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS AND MODIFICATION

As well, you can contact any Medical Clinic in Toronto, Mississauga and Scarborough for Non-Insured Clients

<https://accessalliance.ca/c4cc/>

HOW TO FIND SHELTER IN TORONTO

If you, a relative or a friend requires shelter call Central Intake Line, of the City of Toronto at 416-397-5637. Central Intake is the clearing house for emergency beds in Toronto. Central Intake Assessment and Referral Centre is located at 129 Peter St.

It is not always easy to access shelter space through the Central Intake line, due to the shortage in availability.

It is always best if a Housing Worker makes the call to Central Intake on your behalf, as they are familiar with the system and know when the best times to call are.

Due to COVID-19: 129 Peter St Shelter is closed for walk-in service - contact Central Intake at 416-338-4766

<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/housing-shelter/>

HOW TO GET HELP IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SITUATIONS

If you are a woman seeking shelter from situations of violence or intimate partner violence call our Crisis Line at 416-423-0310 (press '0'), or the Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511. If you have a pet (s) that you cannot leave behind, let the worker who answers the phone know that you would like to use the SafePet Program through Link Coalition Toronto.

The Assaulted Women's Helpline at 1-866-863-0511 offers a 24-hour telephone and TTY 1-866-863-7868 crisis line for abused women in Ontario. This service is anonymous and confidential and is provided in up to 154 languages. They will discuss the warning signs of abuse you have seen and give you practical advice on ways to help.

HOW TO ACCESS THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING HELPLINE

For resources that can help you and organizations that provide various supports, call the Human Trafficking Helpline: 1-833-999-9211 OR 211



RESOURCES AVAILABLE UNDER COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS AND MODIFICATION

As well, for labour human trafficking you can contact the FCJ Refugee Centre MOBILE program at: WhatsApp 647-971-2153

ACCESSING SERVICES IN THE CITY OF TORONTO AS A PERSON WITHOUT STATUS

If you have any questions about identification requirements for any service provided by the City of Toronto, call 311. You do not need to provide any personal information when asking for this service.

There is a Translate option at the bottom of the City of Toronto website. This allows you to use Google Translate to translate the information into 51 different languages.

HOW TO ACCESS FOOD BANKS

Each food bank has different hours and days that they are open, and most serve people in their immediate neighborhoods only. They will ask you for identification or something with your name and address on it.

There are approximately over 200 emergency food programs in Toronto. The following agencies have confirmed that they do indeed serve non-status people. To locate a food bank or food program in or around your neighbourhood, you may call: Food Link Hotline: 416-392-6655

Address: 120 Industry St, York, ON M6M 4L8

Phone: (416) 363-6441

<https://www.foodbankscanada.ca/utility-pages/find-a-food-bank.aspx>

The Stop Community Food Centre continues to provide essential food access services at their main location at 1884 Davenport Road:

- The Stop's Food Bank will run Mondays and Fridays, 12pm-3pm.
- The Drop-in will no longer serve seated meals. Instead, they will serve takeaway meals on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, 9am-10am for breakfast, 12pm-1pm for lunch

<https://www.thestop.org/blog/emergency-food-access/>



RESOURCES AVAILABLE UNDER COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS AND MODIFICATION

The 519 food bank is continuing services

Takeaway meals: We will be providing free ready-to-go meals 7 days a week on The 519 patio in front of FABARNAK Café: Monday to Friday: 1pm and 4pm; Saturday and Sunday: 12:30pm

You can find a list of food banks through the 211 Toronto website

<https://www.211toronto.ca/topic/Central%20Region/ORGANIZATION/fht142/Central%20Region>

HOW TO ACCESS ONTARIO WORKS

To apply for Ontario Works, please call the application centre to complete a phone application. Translators are available on the phone, just request a translator in your language. In the application, they will ask questions about your personal and financial information. After the phone application, you will be asked to either attend an appointment at your local Ontario Works office, or to do an interview on the phone at a later time.

The application phone number depends on where you live:

- City of Toronto (North York, Scarborough, Etobicoke): 416-338-8888
Wait till you hear “You can visit us online...” (after the first pause), then press 3-1-1-2, then wait.
- Peel Region (Mississauga / Brampton): 905-793-9200
Press 3 then wait.
- York Region (Vaughan / Richmond Hill / Markham): 1-877-464-9675
Press 1-1, then wait till you hear “Thank you for calling York Region,” then 3.
- Durham Region (Pickering / Ajax / Whitby / Oshawa): 905-428-8982
Press 1-4.

Ontario Works Services is encouraging you to apply by phone and not online at this moment. If you do the application by phone you will get an appointment sooner than if you do the application online.

The caseworker will then contact the client and will ask for documents to be faxed (if that is possible) such as ID, and bank information (if they have opened a bank account) so that they can provide assistance without having to go for an appointment. However, there can be delays for the appointment due the increasing number of applicants.



RESOURCES AVAILABLE UNDER COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS AND MODIFICATION

ACCESSING INCOME SUPPORT IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19

This resource lists federal and provincial income security programs that could assist Ontarians in these rapidly changing times. Some of these programs existed before the spread of COVID-19, while others have been modified or introduced as a response to the economic downturn. Nevertheless, many low-income individuals, including individuals with pre-existing disabilities and migrant workers, may still fall through the cracks because of deficiencies in current program design.

Content

- Employment Insurance (EI)
- NEW: Emergency Care Benefit
- NEW: Emergency Support Benefit
- Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
- Emergency Assistance
- Canada Child Benefit and Ontario Child Benefit
- Forthcoming: Other Income Support Programs

Link: <http://incomesecurity.org/public-education/accessing-income-support-in-the-wake-of-covid-19/>



COALITION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS CONTACT LIST

To read the complete list follow the link:

<https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Coalition-Contact-list-2020.pdf>

AGENCY	CITY	PHONE	E-MAIL/	WEBSITE
Adam House	TORONTO	416 538 2836	info@adamhouse.org	https://www.adamhouse.org/
First Contact/Red Cross	TORONTO	416 480 0195	firstcontactontario@redcross.ca	www.redcross.ca
Christie Refugee Welcome Centre	TORONTO	416 588 9277		https://christiestreetrc.com/
COSTI / Immigrant Services	TORONTO	416 493 9000	reception@costi.org	http://www.costi.org/
FCJ Refugee Centre	TORONTO	416 469 2670	info@fcjrefugeecentre.org	www.fcjrefugeecentre.org
Matthew house Toronto	TORONTO	416 203 7848	admin@matthewhouse.ca	https://www.matthewhouse.ca/
Quaker Committee for Refugees	TORONTO	416 964 9669	tmmfriendshouse@hotmail.com	www.torontoquakermeeting.org
Romero House	TORONTO	416 763 1303	info@romerohouse.org	https://romerohouse.org/
Sojourn house	TORONTO	416 864 9136	drutembesa@sojournhouse.org	http://www.sojournhouse.org/
The 519	TORONTO	416 355 6794	Info@The519.org	https://www.the519.org/
The Peoples House	TORONTO	416-499-4209	ThePeoplesHouse@thepeopleschurch.ca	www.thepeopleshouse.ca
Micah House	HAMILTON	905 296 4387	info@micahhouse.ca	http://micahhouse.ca/
Casa Maria Refugee Homes	Peterborough	705 7435164	ruthhennessey@sympatico.ca	
Angela Rose house	WINDSOR	226 674 4944	angelarosehouse@gmail.com	http://communityrefugeefund.ca/our-work/angela-rose-house/
Matthew House Windsor	WINDSOR	519 945 7327	info@matthewhousewindsor.org	http://matthewhousewindsor.org/
Diocese of London Refugee Ministry	WINDSOR	519- 256-0506	clairerog@dol.ca	https://dol.ca/ministries
Casa El Norte	FORT -ERIE	905-871-4483	casaelnorte@cogeco.net	
Peace Bridge Newcomers Centre/ Fort Erie Multicultural Centre	FORT-ERIE	905 871 3641	service@firststepsincanada.com	www.firststepsincanada.com
Chez Marie Refugee Assistance	ST CATHARINES	905-682-5795	refugeestcatharines@cogeco.net	https://niagara.cioc.ca/record/NIA3641
Carty House	OTTAWA	613 236 8855	office@cartyhouse.org	https://cartyhouse.org/
Matthew House Ottawa	OTTAWA	613 212 1499	fbinfo@matthewhouseottawa.org	https://www.matthewhouseottawa.org/
MCRS	KITCHENER	519 571 1912	office@mcrs.ca	https://mcrs.ca/
K-W Multicultural Centre	KITCHENER	519 208 9582	intake@kwmulticultural.ca	https://kwmulticultural.ca/
Vive /Jericho Road Community Health Center	BUFFALO, NY	716-892-4354	www.viveinc.org	
Freedom House	DETROIT	313 964-4320	ddrennan@freedomhousedetroit.org	