

FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE

Walking with uprooted people

HOUSING NEEDS FOR IMMIGRANTS: SEARCHING FOR HOUSE RENTAL

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FCJ | **Refugee Centre**
Walking with uprooted people

FCJ Refugee Centre serves refugees and others at risk due to their immigration status, and welcomes anyone asking for advice, counsel and support.



Settlement Program

**Immigration Help &
Refugee Protection**

Anti- Human Trafficking Program

Popular Education

Networking

www.fcjrefugeecentre.org

WHO WE ARE...



Non-profit organization which serves refugees and others at risk due to their immigration status...

WHO WE SERVE...

We welcome anyone asking for advice, counsel and support regarding these issues

More than 5,000 people contact the Centre every year seeking assistance From around the world.

SERVICES/PROGRAMS

IMMIGRATION HELP AND REFUGEE PROTECTION

- Transitional shelter for women and kids
- Housing support
- Women's programs: art class, Entrepreneur Skills, etc.
- Food distribution program
- Virtual community cooking class
- English and Conversation
- Primary Care and Mental Health Clinic
- Youth Program

- Immigration and refugee orientation
- Refugee Process
- Refugee Hearing preparation
- PRRA
- Refugee Appeal
- H&C
- Sponsorships
- Work/Student permit
- Etc.

SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION:

ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROGRAM

- Direct services to trafficked persons
- Supporting migrant workers through our Migrant Workers Mobile Program

- Webinars and training sessions
- Borderless voices podcast
- Youtube channel videos
- Resources: presentations & documents
- Country research
- Seasonal Newsletter and annual reports

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND NETWORKING

HOUSING SEARCH

- Housing challenges during COVID-19
- Types of Housing
- Sharing a Budget
- Where and How to search
- Viewing the apartment
- Rental applications
- Signing the rental contract
- Moving supports
- Your rights and responsibilities
- Available support.

Housing challenges and support during covid-19



Housing Support Coalition



The Housing Support Coalition is a community-led, collaborative support network to offer an extensive holistic response to address the complex housing needs of precarious migrant populations.

The Coalition involves key stakeholders from multiple sectors related to housing issues, including: shelters, municipal administrative bodies, settlement agencies, the legal community as well as precarious migrant populations.

- We work together with the Ontario Coalition of Service Providers (more than 20 agencies, refugee houses and shelters across Ontario)
- We have been follow up on the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, sharing our experiences and looking for a better way to support precarious migrants.
- Those who are living in crowded spaces or are experiencing homelessness are at increased risk due to the conditions in which they live
- Housing challenges:
 - ✓ Landlords creating barriers for newcomers
 - ✓ Required documents
 - ✓ Discrimination
 - ✓ Scams/Charging higher rents
 - ✓ Eviction, finding shelter, etc.

When is the best time to start to look for house?



- The first night in Canada: Shelter, hotel, the living room of a friend or relative. Others had to sleep at one waiting room, a café or a bench
- Finding a place to live can be one of the most difficult tasks for refugees and other precarious migrants
- Beside the refugee or other immigration process, finding house has to be one of the priorities.
- Shelters and transitional houses are only a temporary support that allows to start the search of a house
- Housing searches are challenging and can take time. So its important to start as soon as you are able to.
- The Housing worker is the best support you will have when you are ready to start looking for a house/apartment

Housing /renting options



- House: townhouses, duplexes, semi-detached and single-detached houses
- Basement: basement apartment in a house is often considered an apartment
- Rental rooms: single room or shared space(house or roaming building. This is a cheaper accommodation and as well the most affordable option for single adult on social assistance.
- Rental rooms, which are usually large homes divided into private room.
- Apartment (suite, flat) : Usually includes 1 bedroom or more, a kitchen, a bathroom and a living room. A bachelor or studio apartment
- Bachelor or studio : units made up of has 1 room for sleeping and eating.

<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/rental-housing/i-want-to-rent/types-of-housing-for-rent-in-canada>

Housing Search: what do you need to be aware?



- The key question: Where should I live in Ontario? Take in consideration:
 - Urban or rural (distance)
 - Job opportunities/schools
 - Social and recreational activities
 - Services for newcomers
 - Public transportation/mobility
 - Weather
- Price: things affecting the price; size, location, access to public transportation etc.
- Income and budget: It is important you set a budget before you start looking.
- Location: Check access to public transportation (if you are not driving) Some areas are more expensive than others.
- School and services are available in different areas and can be transferred.
- Sometimes housing outside of crowded cities is more affordable.

How much does it cost to rent an apartment in Ontario?



The cost of renting a home depends on the size (number of bedrooms) and neighbourhood where it is located, and the age and condition of the apartment or house.

Prices vary from city to city and from year to year. Generally, smaller cities have lower rental costs than larger cities.

Example from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Barrie - \$1,270

Brantford - \$971

GTA - \$1,359

Guelph - \$1,109

Hamilton - \$1077

Kingston - \$1,083

Kitchener - \$1,138

London - \$918

St. Catharines-Niagara - \$979

Ottawa - \$1,174

Peterborough - \$1027

Sudbury - \$970

Thunder Bay - \$953

Windsor - \$818

<https://settlement.org/ontario/housing/>

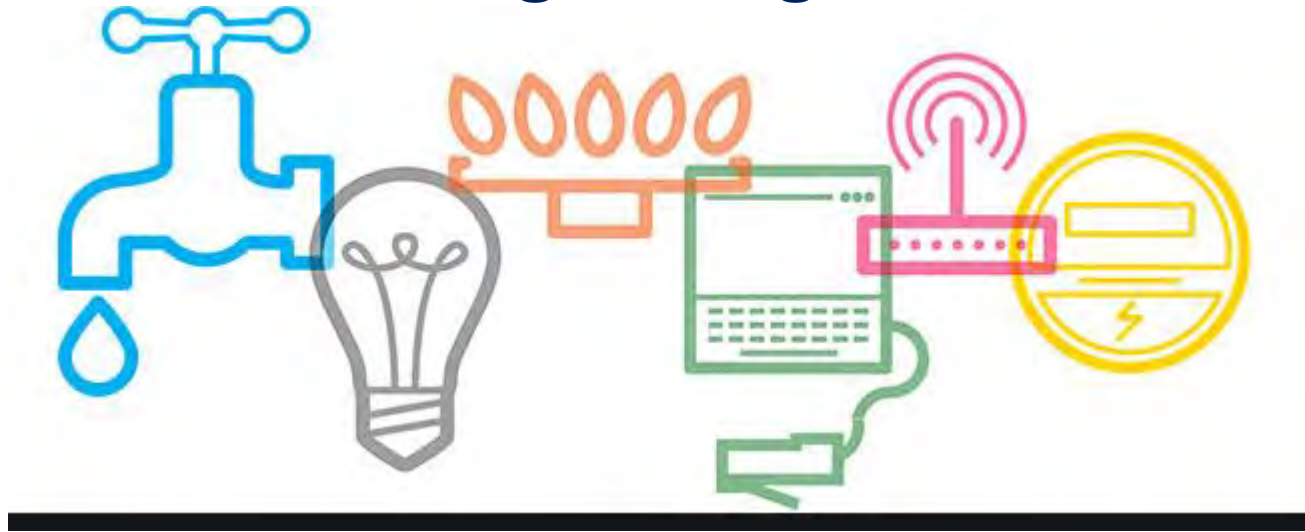
Setting a Budget



- Are you receiving social assistance? How much money will you receive each month?
- Take in consideration the monthly expenses:
 - ✓ Food
 - ✓ Transportation
 - ✓ Phone
 - ✓ Other expenses
- How much you will have for rent?
- Always check the advertised rent amount and the one your landlord is telling you , some times there is a difference



Setting a Budget



Before you rent you have to double check if the rent includes:

- Water,
- Electricity
- Internet /cable
- Heat and Hydro
- Enbridge Consumers Gas

Social Assistance allowance



Shelter + Basic needs

- Single person: \$721/month
- Couple: \$1,118
- Single parent with 1 child: \$1,100/month
- Single parent with 2+ children: \$1270/month
- Couple with 1 child: \$1,286/month
- Couple with 2+ children: \$1,459/month



Where and How to search?

- Ask your friends and relatives.
- Classified section of newspaper/online listings
- Go to areas you are interested in living and look for rental posted sign.



Beware/Cautions in your search

- Be aware of false advertisements of apartment. Some listings online are not really available for rent.
- If someone is asking you for deposit money without offering you a lease of viewing, be cautious. This could be spam.
- Be cautious if you can only contact the person through email, you should be speaking on phone before going to see a place.
- Remember, most of apartment buildings in Toronto are managed by companies and therefore you should be able to contact them through supervisor.

Viewing the Unit/apartment



When you have found a place that you are interested in, call the number listed and ask for an appointment to come and see the apartment:

- Be on time (look for directions ahead of time)
- Be polite and respectful- there are probably lot of people looking at the apartment. It helps to maintain good impression.
- Bring someone with you.
- Ask if you can take pictures.
- Ask to test doors, light switches, toilet flush, electrical outlet if they are working.
- Ask what is included in the rent and what are the extra cost if any.

Applying for the unit



- If you find a place where you want to live you, you will need to fill out an application to show your interest.
- Every application is slightly different but they often ask questions about:
 1. Your personal information (Name, family members)
 2. Finances
 3. Work history in Canada.
 4. As it may require a deposit at the time of application.

Required Documents



- Landlord may ask you to provide following documents:
 - ✓ ID (This might be a requirement but they are not allowed to ask about your immigration status)
 - ✓ Proof of income (OW statement or employment letter)
- You may be asked to provide a guarantor.
 - ✓ Someone who signs the lease with you to confirm rent payment will be made
- Landlords may ask you for other documents but you do not have to provide them. Such as your social insurance number (SIN), Bank Statements.

Important



- Information a landlord CAN ask you:
 - Your income and if you are working
 - The number of people living in the unit and their names.
 - If you smoke or have animals.

- Information a landlord CANNOT ask you:
 - Your age
 - Your sexual orientation
 - Your immigration status
 - Your religion
 - Your health status (including pregnancy)

Signing the Lease



- When landlord has approved your application you will need to sign a contract or lease.
 - Your agreement with the landlord that you will pay rent and utilities (if needed) on time and in a full amount.

- The lease should outline:
 - Monthly costs
 - Responsibilities of the tenant and landlord
 - Length of agreement

- Normally a lease runs for one year, but some contracts are month-to-month.

- If you are satisfied with the unit, you can stay past the one years and do not have to sign another lease.

IMPORTANT



- Do not sign anything you do not understand
- Read the contract or have someone explain it to you so you understand
- Do not hesitate to ask questions
- Get a copy of the signed contract
- Always make sure to get rent receipts (proof that the landlord received your payment)



After Lease signing

- Once you have signed a lease/contract/made an agreement to rent an apartment, you should inform your OW caseworker, request HSF, focus on moving arrangements, etc.
- A settlement organization may be able to schedule an appointment for you at the furniture bank, and give you an information on where to get affordable mattresses if you require furniture.



After Lease signing

- Once you have signed a lease/contract/made an agreement to rent an apartment, you should inform your OW caseworker, request HSF, focus on moving arrangements, etc.
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Housing Stabilization Fund (OW)



- Housing stabilization fund includes last month's rent, moving, rental arrears supports, etc.
- The maximum annual HSF entitlement based on family size is:
 - Singles/Couples – \$1,600
 - Families with Dependent Adults – \$2,000
 - Families with Children – \$3,000
 - Temporary Care – \$560 per child (in temp care)



Toronto Subsidized Housing

- You need to show your legal status in Canada for all household members.
For the list of documents that you can provide are:
 - Permanent Resident Card;
 - Canadian Citizenship Certificate;
- Permanent Resident Document or documentation from Citizenship and Immigration Canada acknowledging application for permanent status in Canada i.e.: on-line application confirming application accepted and being processed;
- Landed Immigrant Status documents including date of landing;
- Immigration documents indicating Convention Refugee, Protected Person Status or Refugee Claimants such as acknowledgement of Convention Refugee Claim, Eligibility Certificate, Notice to Appear, or Notice of Decision;

How do I apply



If you are interested in applying for subsidized housing, where your rent will be based on 30% of your household income, you need to complete an application form.

A quick and easy way to apply is to complete an online application. Or you can print the application form and submit it with the required documents to Housing Connections.

Or you can call or visit their office at 176 Elm St, Toronto



Rights and Responsibilities

- As a tenant, you have both rights and responsibilities.
- You are responsible for:
 1. Paying your rent on time every month
 2. Keeping your unit clean and free of damage
 3. Keeping noise levels low to respect the other tenants in the building.
 4. Taking your garbage, compost, recycling outside or into a bin.

Rights and Responsibilities



- Your landlord is responsible for:
 1. General repairs and maintenance of the building
 2. Repairing anything that came with the unit like appliances or plumbing (stove, fridge, toilet, sink...)
 3. Providing all utilities at all times including water, electricity and heat.
- Your landlord **CANNOT** enter your apartment without advance notice or without your permission.
- Your landlord **CAN** request deposits or fees for last month rent. Key replacement or cheques, that have not been approved by the bank.
- Tenant rights and landlord responsibilities may differ in certain circumstances such as when the landlord lives at the same address or you are sharing an apartment and only one person is named on the lease.



Moving out

- You must give 60 days written notice if you are planning to move out.
- Your landlord must give you 60 days written notice if they are asking you to move out (there are some exceptions to this)

Available Supports



Sometimes tenants face challenges in applying for housing or as a tenant once they move in, if you are facing any issues; you can find support:

- Settlement organizations:
settlement org : <https://settlement.org/ontario/housing/>
- Centre for equality Rights in Accommodation, CERA,
CERA is Canada's leading NGO working to advance the right to adequate housing. CERA provides free services to tenants facing eviction and human rights: <https://www.equalityrights.org/>

Landlord and Tenant Board: <https://tribunalsontario.ca/lrb/>

Community Legal Clinics/Housing help centres

Rent banks



Some of the common websites for rentals

<http://www.viewit.ca/>

<https://www.padmapper.com/>

<https://www.torontorentals.com/>

Bunz Home Zone

<http://www.rentseeker.ca/>

<https://www.walkscore.com/>

<https://4rent.ca/>

Connect with us



416- 469 9754



437-217 3786



647-971 2153 Migrant Workers



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QUESTIONS

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BORDERLESS VOICES PODCAST

Episode #4
Part 1

GETTING
READY FOR YOUR
REFUGEE HEARING

Refugee Hearing Room
74 Victoria St.



REFUGEE HEARING PREPARATION

DAY: OCTOBER 7 TIME: 10:30 AM

If you are a refugee claimant, our webinars can help you to learn about what is going to happen during your refugee hearing. The conversation includes what to expect at the hearing, key elements to take in consideration during your hearing, what happen after your hearing, etc.

REGISTRATION

https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/2020/09/refugee_hearing/