



FCJ Refugee Centre  
*Walking with Uprooted People*

**208 Oakwood Ave. Toronto ON**  
**[www.fcjrefugeecentre.org](http://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org)**

**Response to COVID-19**

# **HOW TO...**

# **FIND HELP**

## **IMMIGRATION SUPPORT**

- How covid-19 is impacting immigration and refugee procedures
- How to make an inland refugee claim if the offices are closed
- Exemptions re: travel restrictions
- How to apply for Legal Aid

How to Find Help was produced thanks to the support of:

208 Oakwood Ave. Toronto, ON  
[www.fcjrefugeecentre.org](http://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org)  
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[info@fcjrefugeecentre.org](mailto:info@fcjrefugeecentre.org)  
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**RESPONSE TO COVID -19**  
**WE ARE OPEN... COUNT ON US**

**Connect with us: 416 469 9754**

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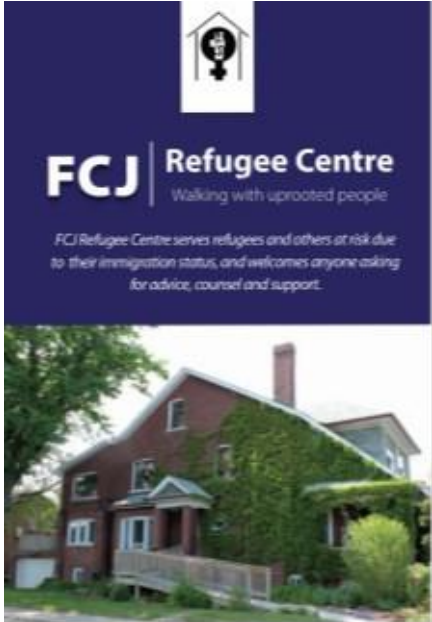
The FCJ Refugee Centre continues to work in solidarity with precarious migrants. We understand that this is a difficult and uncertain time for many, and we're here to support and provide information to you.

We continue to remotely offer our services you can connect with us by phone or e-mail. You can find updated information at our website or social media. You are welcome to join our informative sessions once a week or listen our Borderless Voices Podcast at Spotify, Google Podcast and Apple Podcast.

For any inquiries on any issue or situation related to immigration and refugee process, as well as about all our services please either contact us at our general email [info@fcjrefugeecentre.org](mailto:info@fcjrefugeecentre.org) or call 416-469-9754 and connect directly with us.

**Connect with us**

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-  [info@fcjrefugeecentre.org](mailto:info@fcjrefugeecentre.org)
-  416- 469 9754
-  647-971-2153 Migrant Workers



**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](http://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org)

## HOW COVID-19 IS IMPACTING IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROCEDURES

### IRB SPECIAL MEASURES DUE TO COVID-19

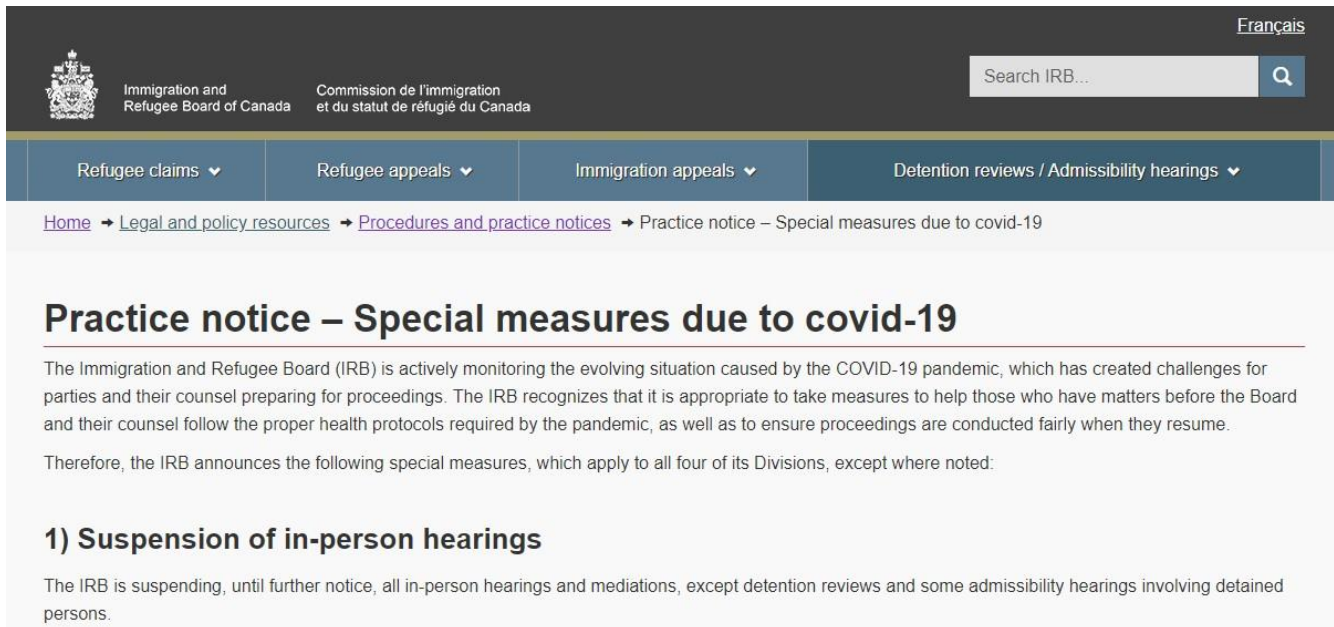
#### SUSPENSION OF IN-PERSON HEARINGS:

Until further notice, all in-person hearings and mediations are suspended, except detention reviews and some admissibility hearings involving detained persons.

#### HEARING RESUMPTION:

The IRB will provide at least 30 days' notice ("The Resumption Notice") before proceeding with a previously scheduled in-person hearing or scheduling a new in-person hearing, except detention reviews and some admissibility hearings involving detained persons

APPLICATION OF IRB RULES: When hearings resume, the IRB will be flexible with respect to the application of its rules where the parties have difficulty complying with them due to the COVID-19 situation.



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada website. It includes the organization's name in English and French, a search bar, and a menu with categories like 'Refugee claims', 'Refugee appeals', 'Immigration appeals', and 'Detention reviews / Admissibility hearings'. Below the navigation is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home → Legal and policy resources → Procedures and practice notices → Practice notice – Special measures due to covid-19'. The main heading is 'Practice notice – Special measures due to covid-19'. The text explains that the IRB is monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic and has suspended in-person hearings. It then lists special measures, starting with '1) Suspension of in-person hearings', which states that all in-person hearings and mediations are suspended until further notice, except for detention reviews and some admissibility hearings involving detained persons.

<https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/legal-policy/procedures/Pages/special-measures-covid-19.aspx>

## **HOW COVID-19 IS IMPACTING IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROCEDURES**

**TIME LIMITS:** Time limits for the filing of various forms and submissions and notices of appeal across various Divisions are being temporarily extended

-Extended the time limit for filing the Basis of Claim Form

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

-Extended the time limit for filing and perfecting an appeal

<https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/legal-policy/procedures/Pages/temporary-extension-time-limits-rad.aspx>

### **HOW TO MAKE AN INLAND 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
- If you are in need of protection and you are currently living in Ontario, please contact us or Legal Aid.
- The only way to start an inland claim process is by contacting Immigration by email.

IRCC.RefugeeClaim-Demandedasile.IRCC@cic.gc.ca

- Once your request has been received, an Acknowledgement of Claim (AOC) letter will be sent to you by email. (There may not be an interview date on this document).
- To confirm that a person has made a refugee claim, one of the following documents should be provided: AOC LETTER OR a Refugee Protection Claimant Document (RPCD)
- RPCD renewals are not being processed at this time, service providers are asked to accept expired RPCDs as still valid, until further notice.
- Acknowledgement of Claim (AOC) letter and the Refugee Protection Claimant Document (RPCD) are used to help determine eligibility for social services.

## **HOW COVID-19 IS IMPACTING IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROCEDURES**

### **CBSA SPECIAL MEASURES DUE TO COVID-19**

Removals are suspended. CBSA clarified that removals could proceed exceptionally where:

Person wants to leave voluntarily

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

### **CBSA ELIGIBILITY INTERVIEWS**

Eligibility interviews have been canceled

FAX your contact information 9056127931

Contact by email Jose Matos: jose.Matos@cbsa-asfc.gc.ca

for contact information 905 612 79 23 or contact Jose Matos CBSA

For immediate assistance call 905 612 7923

### **REFUGEE CLAIMANTS AT ANY AIRPORT ALLOWING INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS**

Only essential travel for visitors is allow to come to Canada

CBSA eligibility interviews are cancel in PIA Toronto but in other regions are allowed by appointment only was still.

### **IRCC SPECIAL MEASURES DUE TO COVID-19**

Exemptions to the air travel restrictions will apply to foreign nationals who have already committed to working, studying or making Canada their home, and travel by these individuals will be considered essential travel for land border restrictions.

## HOW COVID-19 IS IMPACTING IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROCEDURES

### REFUGEE CLAIMS AT ANY USA/CANADA BORDER



If you meet an exception under the STCA (e.g. family member in Canada) you will be allowed to make a refugee claim (but need to comply with 14 day isolation requirements).

If you don't meet an exception under the STCA you will be sent back to the US. NOT assurances from the US about not detaining or nor deporting direct backs.

- There is a new discretionary provision based on "national interest". The Minister has directed that officers use this discretion in two circumstances (and no others): people who may be subject to the death penalty and people who arrive by air (apparently because it is not feasible to send them back to the US)
- There are exceptions to the direct back (as before) for US citizens, stateless persons habitually resident in the US and unmarried unaccompanied minors without a parent or legal guardian in the US.
- The exception for parents of US citizen minors has been dropped

Those entering through irregular border crossings will still be returned to the U.S.

## HOW TO APPLY FOR LEGAL AID

**COVID-19:** Need legal help? Our toll-free number, [1-800-668-8258](tel:1-800-668-8258) remains open to provide assistance.

[Find out what steps we're taking to help you.](#)

### Contact us

The fastest way to get legal aid help is to call Legal Aid Ontario toll-free at [1-800-668-8258](tel:1-800-668-8258). You should always call us before visiting an office. Legal Aid Ontario accepts collect calls.

#### Telephone

Toronto: [416-979-1446](tel:416-979-1446)



<https://www.legalaid.on.ca/>

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



#### **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>**



**VIRTUAL INFO SESSION**  
THURSDAYS 10:30 AM

**IMPACT OF THE COVID 19 IN THE REFUGEE PROCESS IN CANADA**

Connect with us and learn how to navigate the immigration system during this difficult time. The webinar is focused on the refugee process, postponement of refugee hearings and resources available. Also, we will explore ideas on what to do while you are waiting for your refugee hearing.

**Registration**  
**Carolina Teves**  
[cteves@fcjrefugeecentre.org](mailto:cteves@fcjrefugeecentre.org)

For more information you are welcome to join us at our Virtual Information Sessions on Thursdays at 10:30 am .

Also you can listen our Borderless Voices Podcast every Wednesday. You can find them at our website. Feel free to contact us any time 416- 469 9754



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