

Blended VOR Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Blended VOR Program?

The Blended Visa Office-Referred Program is designed to resettle refugees identified by the *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (UNHCR) and submitted to Canadian visa offices abroad. It is referred to as a “blended” program because it is a cost-sharing arrangement whereby *Citizenship and Immigration Canada* (CIC) and *Sponsorship Agreement Holders* (SAHs) both contribute to financially supporting the refugees.

Refugees under this program have already met eligibility and admissibility criteria, making them travel-ready. However, they must be matched with a sponsor before they can travel to Canada.

Why did CIC introduce this program?

As a result of a decision made in the 2012 budget, CIC has shifted 1,000 GAR resettlement spaces to the Blended VOR program. The goal is to maintain the overall number of refugees being referred by UNHCR to Canada and provide further opportunities for involvement by the private sector. As such, the project will be implemented by UNHCR, CIC and private sponsors. To assist in the coordination of the project, a Refugee Resettlement Project Worker has been hired as part of the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program. The Project Worker is responsible for promoting the Blended VOR Program, addressing inquiries and matching refugees selected under this program with sponsors here in Canada.

How does the “blended” model work?

Refugees resettled under the Blended VOR Program will receive income support through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) during the first 6 months after their arrival. They are also fully covered under the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) for the duration of the sponsorship, in addition to provincial health coverage.

For the duration of the sponsorship period, sponsors are required to provide:

- **Reception** (refugees will not be taken to the Reception Centre like GAR/JAS cases)
- **Housing & basic necessities** (this is covered in the first 6 months through RAP income support but sponsors will cover start-up costs)
- **Settlement assistance** (including language classes, enrollment in school, finding health care provider, job search, etc.)
- **Emotional & moral support**

Who will be sponsored under this program?

The focus for 2014 will be on the following populations:

- 250 **Eritreans** in Ethiopia, Egypt & Sudan
- 175 **Iraqis and Iranians** in the Middle East
- 50 **Colombians** in Ecuador
- 25 **Bhutanese** in Nepal or
- **Burmese** in Malaysia

The program will be implemented gradually over a three-year period to reach the final target of 1000 persons through the following projected numbers:

Year	2013	2014	2015
# of persons	200-300	400-500	800-1000

How is this different from the regular Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program?

Under the Blended VOR Program, refugees are referred to Canadian visa offices abroad directly by the UNHCR. For 2014, the Government of Canada has decided to focus on specific refugee populations and sponsoring groups are encouraged to sponsor refugees from these populations. The refugees sponsored under this program are already travel-ready and will thus arrive in Canada sooner, normally within 1-4 months. CIC will provide RAP income support for the first 6 months of the sponsorship period and sponsors would be responsible for the remaining costs (including start-up) as well as settlement assistance throughout the sponsorship period (usually 12 months).

Under the PSR Program, sponsors are able to submit a sponsorship application on behalf of a Convention Refugee Abroad or a member of the Country of Asylum Class. These persons would be assessed under those specific criteria and for eligibility and admissibility under Canadian law before their sponsorship would be approved. Once it is approved and the refugees travel to Canada, the sponsors assume all costs associated with the sponsorship, as well as the responsibilities of settlement over the sponsorship period.

Can refugees be referred to the Blended VOR Program by sponsoring groups?

No. Refugees chosen under this program can only be referred by Canadian visa offices.

Where can sponsors view the available profiles?




Information about available Blended VOR cases can be viewed on the secured CIC website and requested directly from the Refugee Resettlement Project Worker. If a private sponsor would like more information on a particular profile, they can contact the Matching Centre at matching-centre@cic.gc.ca with their specific request. If necessary, the Matching Centre can provide sponsors with additional information.

What happens after a profile has been chosen?

Once a private sponsor has picked a profile, they can request a hold be placed on it by contacting the Refugee Resettlement Project Worker directly. The sponsoring group is given approximately three weeks to decide whether to proceed with the sponsorship or consider other profiles. If the sponsor decides on a case, they can advise the Matching Centre and the Project Worker of their intention to sponsor that profile and request the refugees' personal details be sent to them in order to complete the Undertaking and other forms.

Which forms must be submitted?

In order to proceed with the sponsorship, the private sponsor must submit the following forms:

-  Undertaking/Application to Sponsor
-  Sponsor Assessment (if applicable)
-  Settlement Plan (if applicable)

These forms and the Document Checklist (which must also be included) can be found on the CIC website at:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/private.asp>

Where should the application be submitted?

The completed forms must be sent to:

Centralized Processing Office – Winnipeg (CPO-W)
Box #1B
400 – 25 Forks Market Road
Winnipeg, MB
R3C 4S9

→ *Once the package has been mailed to CPO-W, email both the MC and CPO-W advising them of this.*

Note: In order to ensure faster processing, please follow these steps:

- ✓ Indicate “Blended VOR” on the envelope
- ✓ At the top of the Undertaking, include the VOR profile information as provided by CIC
- ✓ Make sure that you check mark the box on page 3, section E of the Undertaking and include the refugee profile as requested

How soon will the refugees arrive?

Visa office-referred cases are normally ready to travel to Canada within 1 to 4 months of being matched with a sponsor. However, delays may occur in some "travel-ready" cases because of problems in arranging exit permits, travel documents, etc. Once the sponsorship is signed, CIC will provide the sponsor with more accurate information regarding departure and arrival dates, as well as any particular settlement needs that might exist in transit and in the first few weeks after the refugees have arrived in Canada. Sponsoring groups are encouraged to send a welcome letter to the sponsored refugees prior to arrival. This can be emailed to the Matching Centre or the Project Worker.

What happens after the refugees arrive?

Refugees sponsored under this program are considered permanent residents once they arrive in Canada. This means that they are legally entitled to work, go to school, receive health care and access free services for newcomers to Canada such as language classes, employment counseling and other support services. Sponsored refugees are eligible for provincial health care coverage right away.

For information on services available in your province:

Visit www.rstp.ca → Under the Sponsorship Responsibility tab across the top, click on Settlement Services → Find a Settlement Service

How can refugees access RAP and IFH support?

Once they receive the Notice of Arrival Transmission (NAT), the local CIC will email the sponsor to make arrangements for issuing RAP and IFH. Depending on the location of the sponsor, an in-person intake interview might be conducted, or the IFH and RAP documents might be mailed to the sponsor for completion, and returned back to the local CIC.

What happens after the first 6 months?

RAP income support will not be provided after the first six months, therefore sponsors will assume the costs for the remainder of the sponsorship period. All other services, including IFH coverage, remain the same for the duration of the sponsorship period (usually 12 months).

What are the expected costs of sponsorship under this program?

The sponsorship application kit provides details of how much financial support will likely be needed to meet the sponsorship obligations. RAP income support provided by CIC is intended to cover the cost of shelter, food and incidentals for the refugee over their first 6 months, so expected costs can be reduced accordingly. RAP rates are roughly equivalent to prevailing social assistance rates in the expected community of settlement.

What is expected of refugees under this program?

Sponsored refugees are expected to work with their sponsors to develop a detailed plan with the goal of becoming independent and self-sufficient after the end of the sponsorship period. In order to continue receiving support from their sponsors, refugees are expected to remain in their sponsorship community for the duration of the sponsorship period. It is also expected that sponsored refugees would not need to access social services during the sponsorship period since they should be receiving sufficient support from their sponsors.

For more information please contact:
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Refugee Resettlement Project Worker
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Refugee
Sponsorship
Training
Program



What is the process of sponsoring refugees under the Blended VOR Program?

Accessing the Blended VOR Profiles

Blended VOR profiles are posted on the secure CIC website	Sponsoring groups can view the profiles on the website or request them directly from the SAH representative or Refugee Resettlement Project Worker	Sponsors can contact the Matching Centre or the Project Worker for further information on a case
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Choosing a Profile

If a group would like to consider sponsoring a case, they can request a hold be placed on the profile by contacting the Project Worker	Once a group has decided to sponsor a profile, they can advise the Matching Centre and the Project Worker of their intention to do so and the profile will be removed from the website	The sponsoring group should request the refugees' personal details directly from the Matching Centre in order to complete the necessary forms
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Submitting the Application

Sponsors should submit the following forms: <i>Document Checklist;</i> <i>Undertaking/Application to Sponsor; Sponsor Assessment (if applicable);</i> <i>Settlement Plan (if applicable)</i> to CPO-W Review all forms for accuracy and completion	For faster processing, ensure that you have: indicated "Blended VOR" on the envelope; included the VOR profile information as provided by CIC on the top of the Undertaking; check mark the box on page 3, section E of the Undertaking and attach the requested refugee profile	Once the application package has been mailed to CPO-W, feel free to email the Matching Centre advising them of this
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Processing

Once CPO-W has approved the application, they will forward it to the Matching Centre and appropriate Visa Office abroad	Sponsors receive the Notice of Arrival (NAT) with detailed information about refugees' departure and arrival dates	Refugees are ready to travel within 1 to 4 months of the application being received by the Visa Office
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Travel and Arrival

Refugees board a plane to Canada, and are given permanent residency upon arrival	Sponsors are responsible for reception, housing & basic necessities including start-up costs (RAP income support provided for first 6 months), settlement assistance and emotional & moral support	After receipt of NAT, sponsors will be contacted by the local CIC office to schedule an intake interview for RAP and IFH registration, or to make arrangements for completing and mailing these documents
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