

# Visa Office Referrals (VOR)

## ***What are VORs?***

Visa Office Referrals (VORs) refers to refugees who have been identified by the Canadian Visa Officers overseas for resettlement to Canada. Their cases have not been initiated by private sponsors in Canada, but are referred by Officers from abroad. Refugees, who are referred as VORs, have been interviewed by the Canadian visa officers, have met eligibility and admissibility requirements and are ready for travel. Private sponsors in Canada are advised about the resettlement needs of the refugees and are encouraged to sponsor them. Since VORs are generally ready for travel to Canada when they are introduced to private sponsors, they arrive in Canada within a short period of time once private sponsors have committed to supporting them.

In both visa office-referred and sponsor-referred sponsorship cases, private refugee sponsoring groups commit to providing sponsored refugee(s) with basic necessities such (food, housing, clothing, financial support, etc.) and settlement, integration, moral and emotional support for the duration of the sponsorship period (12 months upon arrival in Canada).

## ***What is the difference to the GAR program?***

Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) are also identified by the Canadian visa offices abroad as in need of resettlement. They have met eligibility and admissibility requirements but are resettled to Canada through the assistance of the Canadian government. Once in Canada, they are supported through government funding and settlement support through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) for 12 months. Private sponsoring groups are not involved in the settlement of refugees under the GAR program.

## ***VOR versus JAS***

Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) is a joint resettlement effort whereby private sponsoring groups in Canada partner with the Canadian government to resettle refugees. Refugees sponsored under JAS usually require more assistance and financial resources due to their medical state or other conditions that make them more vulnerable.

JAS cases are identified and assessed by the Canadian visa offices abroad. Once it is established that they meet eligibility and admissibility requirements, private sponsors in Canada are advised about resettlement needs of these refugees and are encouraged to sponsor them. Under JAS, private sponsors commit to providing them full settlement support and assistance for up to 24 months, while the Canadian government provides the financial assistance through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP).

## ***How are VORs different from Sponsor-Referred Sponsorships?***

Sponsor-Referred Sponsorships are usually initiated by private sponsors in Canada. Private sponsors submit the Undertaking for a refugee or a person who is in a refugee-like situation and is known to them. The Canadian visa office abroad will process the refugee's application and determine whether that person meets the eligibility criteria and satisfies admissibility requirements for resettlement to Canada. As with VORs, private sponsors commit to supporting sponsored refugees for the duration of the sponsorship period which is usually 12 months upon arrival in Canada.