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A Rainbow of Hope



This is what it looks like when a group of dedicated volunteers get together to make a difference for refugees. Rainbow Refugee, a Vancouver based community group supports people seeking refugee protection in Canada due to persecution based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression (known as SOGIE) or HIV status.

They recently sponsored Andre, a gay refugee living in East Africa. [See this UNHCR video for the full story.](#) After fleeing persecution, violence and harassment at home, LGBTQ+ refugees can still be at risk in host countries. They often have limited access to education, water, housing and health care, and are regularly exposed to violence. Through the BVOR program, and with sponsor support, refugees can find a safe home in Canada.

Rainbow Refugee is just one example of a community group that helps people form a sponsoring group, and mentors them through the process of resettling LGBTQ+ refugees. In Ottawa, Capital Rainbow Refugee works with similar groups. In Toronto, groups like Rainbow Railroad and the Metropolitan Community Church are devoted sponsors. There are many more groups like this across Canada.

The Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program

The BVOR Program helps resettle refugees identified by United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) as the most vulnerable in need of resettlement. It is called blended because it is a cost sharing arrangement. Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) provides up to six months of income support for the newcomers, while private sponsors provide another six months of financial support, start-up costs and up to one year of social and emotional support.

Currently, there are more than 20 LGBTQ+ BVOR refugees waiting to find a safe home in Canada. They come from countries such as Uganda, Iran, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania. Most speak either English or French, or both. They cannot return to their country of origin as they fear for their safety due to their sexual orientation.

We are looking for groups to give them one year of social, settlement and emotional support. BVOR funding is currently available to help with most of the financial support required of BVOR sponsors. It covers the cost of each BVOR sponsorship except for the start-up costs.

To learn more about the BVOR program and how to sponsor, [please refer to RSTP's Four Steps to BVOR Sponsorship video.](#)



Featured BVOR profile

Single Gay man looking for Sponsors in Canada :

A 28-year-old, single Ugandan male living as a refugee in Kenya has completed Grade 13, speaks fluent English and has worked as a construction worker. He cannot return to Uganda due to fear for his safety stemming from his sexual orientation. He has no contacts in Canada and would greatly benefit from the support of a sponsor in his resettlement process.

You can make a difference in his life by sponsoring him to come to Canada. Form a group and contact the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program. Ask us about the BVOR program.

If you or your group is interested in sponsoring him or another BVOR refugee but require financial support, **BVOR funding is available**. It will help with much of the financial support required of BVOR sponsors, except for start-up costs. All applications should be received by August 31, 2019.

Qualifying SAHs can apply for \$5,000 per BVOR case to help with the administrative costs of BVOR sponsorships.

Right now, there are over 25 BVOR profiles available on RSTP's matching database.

Refugee populations in the BVOR program include:

- Syria, Iran, Iraq
- Democratic Rep. of Congo, Somalia
- Burundi, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Rwanda
- Tanzania and Uganda.

Particular vulnerabilities or reasons for resettlement include:

- Women and girls at risk
- Survivors of violence and/or torture
- Lack of foreseeable alternative solutions
- Persecution based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

To learn more about the countries BVOR refugees come from, visit: <http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugees/country-condition-information/>

To view **BVOR profiles**, please visit **RSTP's website**. If you are interested in sponsoring any of them, enter your user name and password to log in. If you do not have a username or password, please contact us at bvor@rstp.ca.

BLENDING VISA OFFICE-REFERRED (BVOR) PROGRAM

For more information, visit www.rstp.ca or email bvor@rstp.ca

Refugee
Sponsorship
Training
Program



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

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