



BVOR NEWS

Refugee
Sponsorship
Training
Program

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Brantford welcomes BVOR refugees



Brantford is a small Ontario city with a big history. Today, with the help of a local mosque, the city is adding a new chapter to its story – as a community that welcomes refugees. Named after Joseph Brant (Thayendanegea), an important Mohawk chief and respected ally of Great Britain, the city is located 20 kilometers from Canada's most populous reserve, the Six Nations of the Grand River. Brantford is also where Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone, and where Canada's first telephone company, later Bell Telephone, was established. A large bronze statue of Alexander Graham Bell overlooks the central square.

In 2015, responding to the Syrian crisis, the Islamic Council of North America, in Mississauga, decided to sponsor 100 Syrian refugee families to Canada. Abu Noman Tarek, the spiritual leader of the Brantford mosque, spearheaded the settlement of refugees in the area, working with members of the mosque and funded by ICNA Relief Canada. By spring 2019, 65 Syrian families, 34 of them BVOR cases, had been settled in the Greater Toronto Area, Brantford, Chatham and St. Catharines and as far away as Saskatoon and Calgary.

In Brantford, volunteers from the mosque and the Muslim Association of Brantford work with with volunteers from local Catholic, United and other Christian churches to provide settlement support for the newcomers.

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.

The mosque hosts special award dinners cooked by the mosque community to celebrate the sponsors. One recent event included police and hospital representatives, the mayor, Six Nations chief Ava Hill, the local MPP and other political figures as well as mosque members and local sponsors. Reflecting the history and diversity of the area, a special social justice award was presented on behalf of the Muslim Association of Brantford to Amos Key Jr., an indigenous educator.

The Syrian refugee resettlement program has been so successful that ICNA decided to sponsor 11 Rohingya families this past spring. All 11 families were settled in nearby Kitchener, Ontario, with settlement help from members of the local community.

If Kitchener is anything like Brantford, the volunteers will find that not only have they brought refugees to safety, they'll have brought their community together in new and interesting ways.



Featured BVOR profiles

Congolese family needs Sponsors

A 29-year-old Congolese mother accompanied by her partner and their two children currently in South Africa. She has completed four years of education and is currently unemployed. Her partner has completed nine years of education and has worked as a security guard. She and her family are unable to return to their country of origin as they fear for their safety. As the family have no contacts in Canada they may benefit from the support and assistance of a sponsor as they resettle in their new community.

Ethiopian Family looking for Sponsors

A 37-year-old Ethiopian mother accompanied by her spouse and their four children. The entire family is fluent in Somali, and her spouse and eldest daughter are also fluent in English. The mother is unable to return to her country of origin as she fears for her safety and that she will be targeted based on her ethnicity. The family has not identified any contacts in Canada and the additional support provided by a sponsor will assist this family as they resettle in their new community.

Form a group and contact the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program. Ask us about the BVOR program and we will support you with the sponsorship process.

Right now, there are over 200 BVOR profiles available on RSTP's matching database.

Refugee populations in the BVOR program include:

- Syria, Iraq, Iran, Vietnam
- Democratic Rep. of Congo, Somalia
- Burundi, Ethiopia, Colombia, 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

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