

# RSTP Bulletin

The latest news and updates on Canada's Refugee Sponsorship and Resettlement Programs

## The Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) During COVID-19

The Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) is an overseas pre-departure orientation that is implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The COA is delivered to refugees being sponsored under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR), the Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR), the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) and the Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) programs.

During the COA, the IOM: shares information with refugees on life in Canada and their rights as permanent residents; and, addresses any questions or concerns they may have about their resettlement to Canada.

Further information about the COA can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the COA was typically delivered in-person to groups of 25 over 3 days (15 hours in total). However, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the delivery of these in-person sessions.

The IOM's priority is to resume in-person sessions where possible, but they have transitioned to providing the orientation over the phone as a temporary solution.

The telephone COA is 2 hours long on average and is delivered on a one-on-one basis. Calls are made using IOM landlines or IOM issued cell phones and no personal information is shared on the call to protect the privacy of the refugees.

Two calls are made as part of the telephone COA:

- 1) A needs assessment to assess the refugees' availability and language needs, after which they are assigned a facilitator that shares the same language and/or nationality; and,
- 2) The two-hour orientation.

Facilitators have a standard guidance text that they use for the telephone COA. The orientation is typically delivered in the first language of the refugees, but interpreters are used where needed.

The orientation starts with rapport building between the facilitator and the refugees. The facilitator then transitions to sharing information on COVID-19, such as symptoms, how to prevent its spread and the mandatory 14-day quarantine period on arrival in Canada.

For the remainder of the session, key messages on the following

topics are discussed:

- An overview of Canada, including its geography and seasons;
- The refugees' rights, roles and responsibilities;
- The travel itinerary, what to pack, the baggage allowance and important documents;
- Arrival in Canada; and,
- Housing, health, education, budgeting and employment.

Questions are asked by the facilitator throughout the session to ensure the refugees understand the information being shared.

The refugees are also provided with a copy of the COA workbook in an IOM bag at the airport before their departure.

Refugees that attended an in-person COA before their previous travel arrangements were cancelled are still provided with a telephone COA by the IOM.

## IOM Pre-Departure Medical Checks

The COA is one of several contact points where information on COVID-19 is shared with the refugees.

Under a temporary agreement with IRCC, the IOM is providing a pre-departure medical check to refugees (the location of the check varies by country; it may be done a few days in advance and/or immediately before departure).

The pre-departure medical check consists of a temperature check, checking for any symptoms of COVID-19 and asking the refugees how they feel/have felt in the days prior. The refugees are also given information on COVID-19, including written resources, and have an opportunity to ask any questions they may have. The pre-departure medical check **does not** include a COVID-19 test.

A COVID-19 test is only done if the departure, transit or arrival country, or the airline, requires one. For example, anyone transiting through Dubai or travelling with Emirates Airlines requires a test along with anyone travelling internally within Indonesia.

Refugees that self-book their travel to Canada may not receive the telephone COA or any assistance from the IOM in the departure country or whilst in transit.

# UPCOMING RSTP ONLINE WORKSHOPS, WEBINARS AND OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

## September 2020 Monthly Webinars

### What is the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program and How Does it Work?

**Date:** Thursday September 03, 2020

**Time:** 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM EDT

**Registration:** <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6926961047547199760>

### Preparing a Settlement Plan: The Financial and Settlement Responsibilities of Sponsors under the PSR Program

**Date:** Wednesday September 09, 2020

**Time:** 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM EDT

**Registration:** <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/2170199967465219854>

### How to Prepare a Successful Application Package under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program

**Date:** Wednesday September 16, 2020

**Time:** 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM EDT

**Registration:** <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6870332900254197006>

### How to Submit a Refugee Sponsorship Application to ROC-O Via Email and Updating Applications After Submission

**Date:** Wednesday September 23, 2020

**Time:** 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM EDT

**Registration:** <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/2141613764654746894>

### Preparing for Arrival and Providing Post-Arrival Support: Handling Unrealistic Expectations and Practicing Ethical Consideration

**Date:** Friday September 25, 2020

**Time:** 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM EDT

**Registration:** <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1524148925216692494>

### Preparing and Transitioning to Month 13

**Date:** Tuesday September 29, 2020

**Time:** 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM EDT

**Registration:** <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7917972867966696974>

## Subscribe to RSTP's Email List

Subscribe to the RSTP email list by clicking [here](#) to receive the latest updates on how COVID-19 is affecting refugee sponsorship/resettlement to Canada, as well as to get the details of all of our upcoming online trainings, workshops and webinars as soon as they are posted.

## Become a Mentor for the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative!

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) is seeking multi-lingual sponsors to help them with their global mentorship work!

If you are a sponsor, or know a sponsor, that can speak French, German, Italian, Portuguese, or Spanish, and who is interested in mentoring sponsors in other countries, please email: [beth.daniel@refugeehub.ca](mailto:beth.daniel@refugeehub.ca)

## Have Questions? Contact Your Nearest RSTP Trainer

RSTP Trainers are available to provide online workshops and webinars, assistance and support to refugee sponsors.

To find your nearest RSTP Trainer, and the contact details of other RSTP staff, please [click here](#).

## Missed a Webinar?

Recordings of past RSTP webinars can be found on our [website](#) and [YouTube channel](#).



Refugee  
Sponsorship  
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