

CANADABY THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA



Canada 2016 Overview:	
Resettlement programme since: 1978	Dossier Submissions: Case-by-case basis only

Resettlement Admission Targets for 2016:

Admission targets for UNHCR submissions:	27,000
Total Resettlement Admission Target:	44,800

Resettlement Admission Targets for 2017:

Admission targets for UNHCR submissions:	To be confirmed
Total Resettlement Admission Target:	To be confirmed

Regional Allocations:

2016*:		2017:	
Africa:	5,000	Africa:	
Asia:	2,050	Asia:	
MENA: (includes Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt)	35,000	MENA: (includes Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt)	To be confirmed
Europe: (includes Turkey)	2,500	Europe: (includes Turkey)	
Americas:	250	Americas:	

^{*}These admission targets include both UNHCR referred (27,000) and privately sponsored refugees (17,800).

Sub-quota features:

Designated sub-quota/ acceptance for:	2016 Description, additional comments:
Emergency resettlement procedures	Canada is able to take up to 100 urgent protection program (UNHCR equivalent emergency) cases annually.
Medical cases	No limit, but generally no more than 5% of referred cases should have high medical needs.
Women-at-risk cases	No specific allocation
Unaccompanied children	Canada generally does not accept unaccompanied children. Exceptions may be made when there is extended family in Canada.
Family Reunion (within programme)	No quota. Canada's one-year window provision allows reunion of separated nuclear members without a new submission, provided they apply within one year of the date of arrival of the principal applicant, and were identified as a family member prior to the principal applicant's departure for Canada. Under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program, sponsors identify the refugee(s) they would like to sponsor. This program has a strong family-link component.
Other, please specify	Canada has three resettlement streams: 1) Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) are typically UNHCR-referred refugees that receive income support from the Government for their first year in Canada. 2) Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs) are refugees and persons in refugee-like situations identified and supported for their first year in Canada by organizations and individuals. 3) Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugees (BVORs) are UNHCR-referred refugees that are matched with a private sponsor. Income support comes partially from the Government, partially from the private sponsor for the

refugee's first year in Canada.
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1. Resettlement Policy

1.1 Description of Canada's resettlement policy

Canada's resettlement program is administered by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Canada has a long history of providing humanitarian assistance to people fleeing persecution in their homeland or displaced by conflicts.

The objectives of Canada's refugee program is to save lives, offer protection to the displaced and persecuted, meet Canada's international legal obligations with respect to refugees, and respond to international crises by providing assistance to those in need of resettlement.

With the implementation of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* in 2002 Canada has placed emphasis on the following principles for refugee resettlement:

- A shift toward protection rather than ability to successfully establish;
- Long term, multi-year planning;
- Group processing where possible to increase efficiencies where common group resettlement needs are present;
- Rapid family reunification;
- Accelerated processing of urgent and vulnerable protection cases; and
- Balancing inclusiveness with effective management through a closer relationship with partners.

Within its overall immigration plan, Canada resettles Convention refugees, members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Class (HPC) and persons who are admitted under public policy considerations due to the compelling nature of their particular situation. These latter two groups are, respectively, persons who are not Convention refugees but who are in refugee-like situations or who represent vulnerable groups within their own country or a third country and who require protection through resettlement. Through its **Government-Assisted Refugees Program**, Canada sets a target each year for the resettlement of Convention refugees who are eligible to receive financial assistance from the Government of Canada. For Government-assisted refugees, Canada has shifted to an approach which focuses on multiyear commitments to refugee populations, thereby enabling better forward planning for resettlement partners.

In addition, Canada has the **Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program**, which enables organizations and private individuals to submit undertakings for refugees and persons in refugee-like situations (members of the HPC) for consideration for resettlement. Upon approval, the sponsor is responsible for providing financial assistance for a limited period of time and assisting the refugee with integrating in Canada.

Another stream, called the **blended visa office-referred refugee stream** was introduced in 2013. Under this stream, Convention refugees, referred by the UNHCR are matched with a private sponsor. These refugees receive some financial assistance from the Government of Canada and some from the private sponsor.

A number of resettlement spaces are also set aside for **persons who may be admitted under public policy considerations** and who may receive financial asistance from the Government.

Refugees are granted permanent protection in Canada, with refugees processed overseas granted permanent resident status upon arrival in Canada. Permanent Residents then become eligible to apply for citizenship once all requirements are met (see Section 12 below). All resettled refugees, like other Permanent Residents, are eligible to work legally in Canada immediately after arrival and have access to education, health care, and other Government of Canada services.

1.2 Ministries or Departments responsible for resettlement policy

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Québec's Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion are responsible for Canada's resettlement policy.

1.3 Process for deciding the annual resettlement quota and its composition, including the timelines for the process

An annual resettlement range is established by the Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship following consultations with provincial governments. The Minister submits the proposed resettlement level as part of a report on overall immigration levels to Parliament in November of each year. Operational targets are set in accordance with levels. Visa offices receive their initial target allocations in December for the coming year. Targets are then shared with resettlement partners, including the UNHCR.

2. Criteria for Recognition of Refugee Status Eligibility and Asylum

2.1 National legislation defining refugee status eligibility

The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (2001) and its related Regulations.

2.2 Distinction, if any, between refugee status criteria for asylum-seekers, and that for resettled refugees

Asylum seekers in Canada may make a claim based on the provisions of the Refugee Convention, the fear of facing torture or the risk to life, or risk of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment. On the other hand, refugee applicants abroad must meet either the criteria of a Convention Refugee or be a member of the Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad Class.

i) Ability to Establish

Refugee applicants abroad must show potential to become self-sufficient and to successfully establish in Canada within a three to five year time frame. In some "urgent" or "vulnerable" cases, the ability to establish criteria may not be applied or may be applied flexibly (see Sections 8.3 and 8.7 below). Asylum seekers in Canada do not have to meet this requirement.

ii) Ineligibility

Asylum seekers in Canada will be deemed ineligible if:

- a) They came directly from a "safe third country" defined as a country designated by the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*, other than a country of the claimant's nationality or former habitual residence^{1;} or
- b) They made a previous refugee claim in Canada which was determined to be ineligible, or was accepted, rejected, withdrawn, or declared abandoned by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, or
- c) They have been recognized as a Convention refugee by a country other than Canada and can be sent or returned to that country.

These restrictions do not exist for refugee claimants abroad.

iii) Durable Solution

Refugee applicants abroad must prove that they have no reasonable prospect, within a reasonable period of time, of a durable solution in a country other than Canada. This forward-looking assessment of a possible durable solution does not exist for asylum seekers in Canada.

¹ The only country that has been designated to date as a "safe third country" is the United States of America.

iv) Determination of Refugee Claim

Claims of refugee applicants abroad are determined by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada visa officers overseas (administrative process). On the other hand, claims of asylum seekers in Canada are adjudicated by the Refugee Protection Division of the **Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada** (quasi-judicial process).

3. Criteria for Resettlement

3.1 Refugee resettlement eligibility criteria

Canada will only consider an applicant for resettlement as a refugee if s/he is referred by:

- UNHCR
- Another (designated) "Referral Organization"
- A Private Sponsor (i.e., already has an approved private sponsorship)

An applicant must meet the criteria of the 1951 UN Convention or meet the criteria of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Class (HPC). In addition, the applicant must have no reasonable prospect, within a reasonable period of time, of a durable solution in a country other than Canada.

Normally, applicants must show potential to become self-sufficient and successfully establish in Canada within a three to five year time frame. Factors such as education, presence of a support network (family or sponsor) in Canada, work experience and qualifications, ability to learn to speak English or French and other personal suitability factors such as resourcefulness will be taken into account by visa officers. However, these criteria do not apply to refugees determined by a visa officer to fall within the categories "urgent need of protection" or "vulnerable" (see section 7).

3.2 Admissibility criteria

For a refugee to be accepted by Canada s/he must pass:

- A medical examination Successful applicants must not be suffering from a
 medical condition which is likely to be a danger to public health or safety.
 However, unlike applicants for other immigration categories, refugee applicants
 are not refused on grounds of medical inadmissibility due to excessive demand
 on Canada's healthcare system;²
- Criminal screening Refugees are not required to submit police certificates from their country of origin;
- **Security screening** Canada will not accept any person who participated in criminal activity, criminal organizations, or violation of human or international rights. For example, combatants who have participated in war crimes or crimes against humanity, senior officials, including former or serving senior military officials from certain regimes or individuals who belong to organizations that engage in acts of espionage, subversion against a democratic government or institution, subversion by force of any government or acts of terrorism, are inadmissible under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*. As part of the security screening process, biographical and biometric information, including fingerprints and digital photos are collected for applicants between the ages of 14 and 79 (inclusive). For more information, please contact a Canadian visa office.

July 2011, revised August 2014, revised October 2016

² Note, however, that in order to give the various visa offices advance notice on cases with additional medical needs, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada requests that the referral from the UNHCR include the complete medical/health details of the person(s) referred.

3.3 Other humanitarian immigration programmes

Either upon request of the foreign national or on the Minister's own initiative, the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* gives the Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship the authority to apply judgment and flexibility in cases that do not meet the requirements of the Act, but which are justified by humanitarian and compassionate or public policy considerations. In the case of applications submitted abroad, the Minister's authority is discretionary. S/he has no obligation to consider an application on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

4. Resettlement Allocations/Processing Priorities

4.1 Resettlement allocation including sub-quotas

An annual resettlement target is established by the Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship following consultations with stakeholders. In 2016 the refugee resettlement admissions range is 41,000 to 46,000, with a range of 24,000 to 25,000 for Government-assisted refugees and 2,000 to 3,000 for blended visa office-referred refugees. The annual operational targets, which are set within this range, are then allocated among visa offices on the basis of established multiyear commitments and resettlement needs, combined with existing inventory and available processing resources.

Visa offices that identify refugees in need of resettlement but which do not have sufficient space in their target can make a request to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada for additional places. Should the Department approve the request, there will not be an increase in the overall target. Rather, the Department would reallocate places from one visa office to another in order to accommodate the request. Resettlement needs and visa office targets are monitored continuously throughout the year and adjustments are made to each visa office's targets as required.

The target number refers to individuals, not cases, and operates on the calendar year. Refugees must arrive in Canada and be granted permanent residence to be counted toward the annual target. Processing can be carried over into the next calendar year for refugees not able to travel the same year in which processing begins.

4.2 Processing Priorities: urgent and vulnerable cases

See section 7

4.3 Non-UNHCR allocations, including role of referral organisations

In addition to establishing the number of Government-assisted refugees to take in a calendar year, a range is established for the number of persons expected to be resettled under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (see section 8.6). For 2016 the range established for privately sponsored refugees is 15,000 to 18,000 individuals.

Through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program, the Government of Canada encourages Canadian public involvement in the resettlement of Convention refugees and members of the Humanitarian Protected Persons Class. Through this program, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), faith-based organizations, communities, organizations and groups of individuals agree to sponsor refugees by entering into an agreement with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

Sponsoring groups commit to providing the sponsored refugee and his or her immediate family members with basic assistance in the form of accommodation, clothing, food and settlement assistance normally for one year from the refugee's date of arrival in Canada. The sponsoring group also assists the refugee to find employment and become self-supporting within the period of the sponsorship agreement. Private sponsors may identify a refugee they wish to assist or may select a refugee referred by a visa office for matching

with a private sponsor. When a sponsor agrees to assist an individual or family referred by the visa office, the Government of Canada provides up to six months financial support.

5. Submission and Processing via Dossier Selection

Interviews are required in most cases. In addition to verifying the identity and eligibility of refugee applicants, interviews are used to elicit detailed family composition and background information, answer statutory questions and give authorizations that are not included in the UNHCR Resettlement Registration Form (RRF).

In emergency cases where an urgent protection need has been identified or in other cases that are fully documented and in locations that cannot be accessed by a visa officer, the interview requirement may be waived.

An applicant who is refused abroad can seek leave for judicial review of the decision before the Federal Court of Canada.

6. Submissions and Processing via In Country Selection

6.1 Selection mission policies

Applicants will normally be interviewed by a visa officer who will determine whether the applicant meets Canadian eligibility and admissibility criteria (see sections 3.1 and 3.2). Medical examinations are requested if a refugee has been accepted and must be carried out prior to issuance of an immigrant visa. Criminality and security screening also takes place at this time. The final decision to accept or reject an applicant will be made by the visa officer based on the results of the interview, medical examination, and criminality and security checks. If an applicant is refused s/he will be informed of the negative decision and a letter outlining the reasons for the refusal will be sent to the applicant. The visa office will also advise the UNHCR of the decisions made on the cases referred by the UNHCR.

6.2 Case Documentation

The following documents should be included with a submission to Canada:

- UNHCR Resettlement Registration Form (RRF), ensuring all sections are completed (to be sent electronically where possible);
- Other relevant documentation (e.g., birth, marriage, divorce, death certificates, ID cards, school and employment documents, medical certificates, etc., if available);
 and
- Cover letter explaining why the refugee requires resettlement and whether s/he is at risk or falls into an urgent category ("urgent" in UNHCR terminology is the equivalent of "vulnerable" in Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's terminology).

For emergency cases ("emergency" in UNHCR terminology is the equivalent of "urgent" in Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's terminology). Reasons for requesting urgent processing should be clearly stated (see section 7).

6.3 Routing of Submissions

Canada has a decentralized system in which cases are submitted and processed in the field. Submissions should be made directly to the responsible Canadian visa office. For more information on Canadian visa offices and their areas of responsibility, please consult the following website: www.cic.gc.ca.

6.4 Processing Times

Processing times vary among visa offices depending on such factors as: communications and travel infrastructure; caseload at the visa office in refugee and other business lines; location of refugee populations and types of medical needs; and processing resources

available. In the event of an urgent/emergency case, the Canadian visa office should be clearly advised at the time of submission so that processing may be expedited.

For processing times at each of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's visa offices please visit: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/times/perm-other.asp

6.5 Recourses/Appeals

In the case of a refusal where the UNHCR requests reconsideration, the Immigration Program Manager at the responsible visa office should be contacted. There is no formal appeal system at the visa office. There is only the possibility of leave for judicial review of the decision at the Federal Court of Canada. If there are compelling reasons to believe that Canadian resettlement policy has not been interpreted properly, further advice can be requested from UNHCR Branch Office in Ottawa.

6.6 Other details: Immigrant Loans and Contributions

In the case of refugees who cannot afford to pay for their own immigration medical examination (see Section 9) or travel to Canada, an immigrant loan may be authorized to cover these costs.

Where necessary, transportation to the interview location may also be included in the loan.

A refugee must demonstrate the need for and the potential to repay the loan. Refugees are required to begin repaying the loan (in monthly instalments) shortly following arrival in Canada. Under certain circumstances, loan repayment may be deferred for up to two years. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada may cover the cost in cases where refugees with special needs are unlikely to ever be able to repay the loan.

An arrangement is in place between Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to manage the loan process. IOM covers the costs put on the loan up front and is reimbursed by the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

7. Emergency Cases/Urgent Cases

7.1 Policies and procedures for receiving referrals for emergency / urgent / vulnerable submissions & routing of submissions

Urgent Cases ("Emergency Cases" in UNHCR Terminology)

Canada's Urgent Protection Program (UPP) is intended to respond to emergency requests from UNHCR to provide urgent protection to persons who qualify for resettlement. These persons must be in need of urgent protection through resettlement due to immediate threats to their life, liberty or physical safety. Medical emergencies do not qualify for the UPP.

UNHCR emergency cases are to be submitted directly to the visa office that covers the area where the refugee resides, with a copy of the referral going to the UNHCR office in Canada, which immediately informs Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's headquarters. The visa office will then inform the UNHCR within 24 hours whether the visa office can respond to the emergency request.

In UPP cases, Canada's preference is to complete processing to permanent resident visa issuance. This process requires completion of expedited medical examinations and background checks. Canada aims to process UPP cases from submission to departure within one week. However, in many cases it is not logistically feasible to meet the one week guideline and for this reason, visa offices maintain close contact with UNHCR on UPP cases.

When it is not possible to complete all requirements overseas within the prescribed timelines, a visa office may issue a Temporary Resident Permit instead. The Temporary

Resident Permit document allows a refugee to travel to Canada before all the statutory (medical, security, and criminality) checks have been completed. The refugee will undergo or complete medical and background checks in Canada. The refugee can apply for permanent residence once the necessary requirements are met.

Vulnerable Cases ("Urgent Cases" in UNHCR terminology)

Canadian visa officers may determine a refugee to be vulnerable, meaning the person has a greater need of protection than other applicants because of particular circumstances that give rise to a heightened risk to his/her physical safety or well being. The vulnerability may result from circumstances such as lack of protection normally provided by a family or a medical condition. If the UNHCR flags a case as "urgent", the visa office will give consideration to whether processing can be expedited due to the applicant's vulnerability. If cases are assessed as vulnerable they will be prioritized before regular refugee cases and will be eligible for expeditious processing (from one to four months).

7.2 Case documentation for emergency/urgent/vulnerable cases

Urgent ("emergency" in UNHCR terminology) protection and vulnerable ("urgent" in UNHCR terminology) cases should be submitted directly to the Immigration Program Manager at the relevant Canadian visa office with supporting documentation as described in Section 6. An explanation as to why UNHCR believes the case to be urgent or vulnerable should be included with the submission.

Both refugees admitted under the UPP and those determined by a visa officer to be vulnerable are not required to demonstrate an ability to successfully establish in Canada.

8. Special Categories/Special Needs

8.1 Refugees with Medical Needs

Refugee cases involving special medical needs should, where possible, be flagged for the responsible Canadian visa office. This includes situations where a dependent of the principal applicant has a medical condition. If the medical condition presents a danger to public health or safety, an applicant may fail Canada's medical examination.

In Canada, provincial governments are responsible for health care and social services. Some health conditions may require frequent or costly medical treatment. Depending on the circumstances of the case, refugees with medical conditions may need to be destined to particular areas where the required medical services are available. As a result, processing times for such cases may be lengthy. Other medical conditions may require substantial support from other persons. Thus, when recommending refugee cases with medical conditions it is worth considering the presence of accompanying or other family in Canada able to assist the refugee. It is recommended that UNHCR consult with the responsible Canadian visa office if there are questions regarding the referral of a specific case.

8.2 Survivors of Violence and Torture

Persons who are survivors of violence and torture and who may need additional assistance establishing in Canada may be considered vulnerable or urgent cases, depending on the circumstances of each case (see section 7). Such cases may be processed under the Joint Assistance Sponsorship Program (please refer to section 8.7 for details). Treatment for such cases is available in a number of Canadian cities. Cases should be submitted directly to the visa office with any need for follow-up treatment noted in the submission.

8.3 Women at Risk

The aim of the Canadian Women-at-Risk Program is to provide protection and assistance to refugee women who are in critical situations. Canada defines women-at-risk as "women without the normal protection of a family who find themselves in precarious situations and

who are in a place where local authorities cannot ensure their safety". This definition also includes women who experience significant difficulties such as harassment by local authorities or by members of their own communities. The Program recognizes that refugee women in these circumstances require additional assistance to establish successfully in Canada.

To be eligible for this program, women-at-risk must be Convention refugees or members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Class. Urgent and vulnerable cases are given priority and the ability to establish criteria will not be applied (see section 7). In other words, women-at-risk may be accepted despite having limited settlement prospects.

Not all women-at-risk face immediate danger. They can also be living in unstable conditions and resettlement in a third country offers the only solution. In this case, the ability to successfully establish will be assessed by Canadian visa officers on a 'sliding scale'; that is, the greater the need for protection the less weight placed on establishment considerations.

Routing of Submissions

All women-at-risk cases should be submitted directly to the responsible Canadian visa office. Urgent cases are eligible for expedited processing and should be clearly marked and accompanied by an outline of the reasons for urgency (see section 7). UNHCR RRF and Social Assessment forms must also be completed.

8.4 Children

If an unaccompanied minor abroad has family in Canada, s/he could be eligible for consideration as a Government-assisted refugee, privately sponsored or sponsored under Canada's Family Class Program.

A visa office refers such cases to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Refugee Matching Centre, which coordinates with the appropriate local office to contact the minor's relatives in Canada to determine their willingness and ability to provide support and act as guardians for the minor.

If an unaccompanied minor abroad has no family in Canada willing to act as the minor's quardian, the current policy is to not accept him/her for resettlement.

8.5 Elderly

Elderly refugees with immediate family in Canada can be considered for resettlement in order to reunite families that have been separated. Also eligible for resettlement are elderly refugees dependent on another refugee that is being referred to Canada for resettlement, or with extended family in Canada.

Elderly refugees without close family ties in Canada and who are not accompanied by family members can be considered for resettlement when there are compelling protection needs. Such cases would likely require additional settlement assistance and may be eligible for a Joint Assistance Sponsorship (see section 8.7).

8.6 Private Sponsorship

The Government of Canada encourages involvement of the Canadian public in the resettlement of Convention refugees and members of the Humanitarian Protected Persons Abroad Class. In some cases, these persons would not otherwise meet the eligibility requirements without the added support that a private sponsor provides.

Under this category, NGOs, faith-based organizations, community organizations and individuals agree to privately sponsor refugees. The sponsorship of refugees by Canadian citizens and permanent residents allows for the admission of refugees in addition to the number whose admission is financially assisted by the Government of Canada. Sponsoring groups commit to provide the sponsored refugee with basic assistance in the form of

accommodation, clothing, food, income support and settlement assistance normally for one year after the refugee's arrival in Canada. The sponsorship period may be up to thirty-six months in exceptional circumstances. The sponsoring group also assists the refugee to find employment and become self-supporting within the period of the sponsorship agreement. Private sponsors may identify a refugee they wish to assist or select a refugee referred by a visa office.

Criteria

Eligibility and admissibility criteria described in Section 2 apply to privately sponsored refugees.

8.7 Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)

This program is intended for Convention refugees selected as Government-assisted refugees with higher than normal settlement needs, including refugees whose personal circumstances may include a large number of family members, trauma from violence or torture, medical disabilities or the effects of systemic discrimination.

A Joint Assistance Sponsorship allows the Government of Canada and a private sponsorship group to share the responsibilities of sponsorship for refugees who are in need of assistance over and above that which is provided through either Government of Canada assistance or private sponsorship alone. The Government of Canada assumes full financial responsibility while the private sponsorship group is committed to ensuring the refugee's integration. The period of sponsorship may be typically extended for two years and up to three years for exceptional cases such as separated minors.

Eligibility and admissibility criteria are applicable. There is, however, some flexibility on the ability to successfully establish criteria because of the additional support available to the refugees. In exceptional situations, transportation and medical costs may be covered by the Government of Canada as opposed to a loan (see Section 11.2 below). In-Canada Joint Assistance Sponsorship determination is also possible should the need for greater settlement assistance be identified after a refugee's arrival in Canada.

8.8 Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR)

The BVOR program was launched in 2013. This program matches refugees identified for resettlement by the UNHCR, with private sponsors in Canada. This program allows the Government of Canada to engage in a three-way partnership with the UNHCR and private sponsors, which allows both new and experienced sponsors to cost-share with the Government and become involved in protecting refugees with whom they have had no previous contact. Under this program, the Government of Canada provides up to six months of income support through the Resettlement Assistance Program, while private sponsors provide another six months of financial support and up to a year of social and emotional support.

9. Medical Requirements

Canada does not admit applicants who suffer from a medical condition which is likely to be a danger to public health or safety. If applicants are diagnosed with a condition that would be a danger to public health (i.e., active tuberculosis or untreated syphilis), they receive treatment. When further tests indicate they no longer pose a danger, their cases can be approved for visa issuance and travel to Canada. Refugee applicants are not refused based on medical inadmissibility due to excessive demand on Canadian health or social services, as is the case with some other immigration streams.

All immigrants to Canada, including refugees, must pass a medical examination, which is provided by a local physician ("Immigration Medical Examiner") authorised by the Government of Canada. Refugee applicants will be made aware of any medical conditions found during the immigration medical examination by Medical Examiners and are advised

to seek medical attention and/or counseling, depending on their condition. A Canadian physician employed by the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada then assesses the results of the medical examination.

In the case of Convention refugees and members of the Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad class who do not have money to pay for a medical examination, a loan may be issued under the provisions of the Immigration Loan Program (see Section 11.2 below). This program is available to both Government-assisted and privately sponsored refugees. In countries where the IOM is arranging travel for the refugees, the organization may also arrange and prepay medical examinations. Canada later reimburses IOM for the cost incurred on behalf of refugees successfully resettled to Canada.

10. Orientation (pre-departure)

The Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) Program provides visa-ready refugees bound for Canada with orientation prior to their departure. COA sessions consist of three to five days of pre-departure training covering topics such as introduction to Canada, the settling-in period, employment, rights and responsibilities, geography and climate, finding a place to live, living in a multicultural society, the cost of living, family life, education, communication systems and adaptation to Canada. COA emphasizes the importance of arriving to Canada with realistic expectations. The Government of Canada has contracted with the IOM to deliver the COA. Participation is voluntary and free of charge. COA also provides targetted orientation for refugee youth. COA's *Youth Refugee Curriculum* is a teaching handbook allowing for a customized and tailored curriculum to meet the information needs of youth.

11. Travel

11.1 Travel booking procedures

Arrangements for travel to Canada are generally made by the IOM in co-ordination with a visa office. IOM also remains in close communication with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Refugee Matching Centre, which identifies destinations for refugees based on available settlement services, presence of relatives or members of the same community, and other factors.

11.2 Payment

Loans from the Government of Canada are available to Government-assisted as well as privately sponsored refugees to cover the cost of their travel to Canada. Government-assisted Refugees identified as special needs refugees (persons with disabilities, women at risk, etc.) may be eligible for contributions in lieu of loans, to cover their travel costs.

As part of its commitment to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees between November 4, 2015, and February 29, 2016, the Government of Canada covered travel costs to Canada for all Syrian refugees and stateless persons formerly residing in Syria. As of March 1, 2016, Government-assisted Syrian refugees, including Blended Visa Office-Referred refugees, will continue to have their loans waived until December 31, 2016, or up to a maximum of 10,000 refugees, whichever comes first. All other refugees, including Syrians not part of these two commitments, have been and will continue to be issued interest-bearing loans for the overseas costs associated with their transportation and resettlement to Canada.

11.3 Travel documents issued

All foreign nationals travelling to Canada are issued a permanent resident visa in the form of a generic counterfoil coded for immigration (IM-1). In the case of refugees who are stateless or cannot obtain passports from their countries of nationality on which the visa can be affixed, a Single Journey Document for Resettlement to Canada (SJTD) (IMM 5485) can be issued by the visa office. It serves as travel identification and can only be used for the first trip to Canada for entry as a Permanent Resident.

12. Status on Arrival and the Path to Citizenship

Except for those who are issued a Temporary Resident Permit, all refugees processed overseas are granted permanent resident status upon arrival in Canada. Those who arrive with Temporary Resident Permits may apply for permanent residence once medical and background checks are passed.

Canadian citizenship may be granted to permanent residents who meet certain requirements, including:

- Is a Permanent Resident with no unfulfilled conditions under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*;
- Has been physically present in Canada for 1460 days during the six years prior to applying and has been physically present in Canada for at least 183 days in four calendar years out of the six years preceding the application;
- Has met applicable requirements to file a return of income in four taxation years that are fully or partially within the six years immediately before date of application;
- Intends to reside in Canada;
- If between the ages of 14 and 65 at date of application, has an adequate knowledge of English or French;
- If between the ages of 14 and 65 at date of application, has an adequate knowledge of Canada and the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship; and
- Is not under a removal order or prohibited due to security or other reasons.

Since February 6, 2014, the Citizenship Application fees are \$530 for an adult applicant and the current process takes approximately 12 months or less for straightforward cases.

With the exception of children born to foreign diplomats, consular officers or other representatives or employees in Canada of a foreign government, children born in Canada (before or after naturalization of their parents) are issued Canadian provincial or territorial birth certificates and are Canadian citizens.

13. Domestic Resettlement, Settlement and Community Services

13.1 Overview of services, including providers and length of eligibility

Canada's Settlement Program funds a broad range of services that support the full participation of newcomers, including resettled refugees and protected persons, in the economic, social, cultural and civic life of Canada. Canada has a continued commitment to refugee settlement and funds programming that supports a 'two-way street' approach that helps immigrants learn about Canadian values while also helping Canadians understand the diverse backgrounds of newcomers.

A key element in Canada's strategy for integration of refugees is the recognition that these individuals often face multiple barriers to integration and benefit from efforts made to meet these needs. Canada has the benefit of many years of experience resettling refugees from all parts of the world. Providing settlement services for multi-barriered clients, including refugees, continues to be a priority to meet the diverse needs of these newcomers to Canada. Targetted programming is in place for newcomer women, children/youth, seniors and families. In Canada, settlement services are not delivered directly by the Government of Canada. Rather, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada funds eligible individuals, non-profit organizations, agencies serving immigrants and refugees, community groups, businesses, provincial and municipal governments, and educational institutions (together, referred to as Service Provider Organizations) to provide services to help newcomers integrate successfully into Canadian society. Many Service Provider

Organizations have individuals on staff who are able to speak the refugee's language and may share the refugee's culture.

The Resettlement Assistance Program offers income support (see section 13.9) administered directly by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to Government-assisted refugees, as well as a range of immediate essential services delivered by Service Provider Organizations. Under Private Sponsorship (section 8.6) and Joint-Assistance Sponsorship (section 8.7), immediate and essential services are provided by sponsors. Privately-Sponsored Refugees and refugees receiving Joint-Assistance Sponsorship may also access services funded through the Settlement Program in addition to supports provided by their sponsors.

13.2 Reception

Upon arrival at a port of entry, refugees in transit are assisted with landing procedures and inland transportation. Arrangements are also made for overnight accommodation and meals, if required. Arrangements to be greeted at their final destination are normally made for refugees who need additional reception assistance. Refugees who arrive in Canada between mid-October and mid-April are provided with any necessary winter clothing.

13.3 Orientation and Needs Assessment

Orientation materials are provided to help newcomers better understand the Canadian way of life and society. Both written and audio-visual materials are used overseas in pre-arrival orientation sessions and in local offices and Service Provider Organizations across Canada.

After arrival in Canada, refugees receive orientation to assist with settlement into their new community. Topics such as renting accommodation, shopping, telephones, food and cooking, public local transportation, and safety are covered. All refugees are also eligible for assessment through the Needs Assessment and Referral Services (NARS), whereby service providers help newcomers to understand their settlement needs and develop a personalised settlement plan to achieve their objectives and facilitate integration into Canada.

Referral to Mandatory Federal / Provincial Programs and Settlement Programs

Refugees are assisted with applications for medical insurance, social insurance numbers, permanent resident cards and child tax benefits and with transfer and translation of employment records. They are also referred to language training and other settlement program and broader based community services.

13.4 Housing

Temporary accommodation is provided to Government-assisted refugees until permanent housing is secured. In some cases, this accommodation is provided commercially from hotels and motels. In other cases, accommodation is provided from organizations that have reception house services.

Privately sponsored refugees (see section 8.6) receive accommodation support directly from sponsors who secure accommodation for the duration of the sponsorship period.

13.5 Health

Refugees are eligible for provincial or territorial health coverage usually no later than 90 days after arrival in the province or territory in which they intend to reside. Under the Interim Federal Health Program, the Government of Canada provides limited, temporary health-care coverage to eligible individuals until they become eligible for provincial/territorial health-care coverage. Under this program, beneficiaries receive basic health-care coverage, similar to health-care coverage provided by provincial/territorial health insurance plans to Canadians and permanent residents, supplemental coverage for services such as

vision and urgent dental care, and prescription drug coverage, similar to the coverage provided by provincial and territorial governments to those on social assistance.

Health promotion activities are available through information and orientation products and or recreational/community based interventions that promote and foster healthy living.

13.6 Language Training

Acquisition of language skills in one of Canada's Official Languages, English and French, is crucial for integration into Canadian society. Therefore, instruction in one of Canada's two official languages is available to adult immigrants and refugees through federally and some provincially funded programs. Resettled refugees (who arrive in Canada as Permanent Residents and protected persons) are eligible for free Government of Canada-funded language training in English and French, delivered through Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and Cours de language pour les immigrants au Canada (CLIC). For more information on funded language training offerings, please visit http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/language.asp.

To begin LINC or CLIC language classes, a newcomer must first get an assessment. To find the address and contact information for an assessment centre, please consult http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/map/services.asp or call Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's call centre at 1-888-242-2100. To find information about language training programs funded by provincial governments, please consult the website of the province/territory of settlement/residence.

In addition, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Language Training for Canada video is intended to raise newcomer awareness on the importance of official language skills for settlement and the steps to take to improve them before and after arrival in Canada. The video is available on the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship's web site in English and in French and on the Department's YouTube channel:

• English: https://youtu.be/s70924191lk

• French: https://youtu.be/liWBN ICdw0

Arabic: https://youtu.be/epNZbEuC3YM

13.7 Education

Elementary and secondary schools fall under provincial jurisdiction. Immigrant and refugee children, once Permanent Residents, are required to attend provincially-funded public schools. Post-secondary education is not free in Canada, but neither is it restricted to the affluent. There are various scholarships and university student loan programs available. Entrance to colleges and universities is based on a person's educational abilities, as demonstrated through high-school grades, and sometimes through equivalent work and/or voluntary experience.

The Settlement Program funds services in elementary and secondary schools to enable successful integration through specialised and culturally adequate support, while raising awareness of settlement issues within the school system and building capacity for institutional change. For example, Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS), is an outreach program in Canada that aims to support newcomer students within the mainstream school system.

13.8 Employment and Employment-Related Training

Resettled refugees, like other Permanent Residents, are eligible to work legally in Canada immediately after arriving in Canada. Federal employment and training programs are administered by **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**. Provinces and territories also deliver their respective suite of programs and services. All residents of

Canada, including newly arrived immigrants and refugees, have access to labour market programs, services and information, including the Job Bank/Job Match tool.

Furthermore, all unemployed Canadians have access to the services offered through community organizations. Through the local planning process, Service Canada will work with provinces, other federal departments, and other partners to identify gaps in service and collaborate on serving immigrants and refugees.

In addition to these generalized services, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, through its Settlement Program, funds an array of newcomer-focussed employment-related services that are delivered by provincial governments and Service Provider Organizations.

During the needs assessment exercise (see section 13.3), settlement workers assess the resettled refugee's skills, language knowledge and credentials, and provide them with relevant labour market information and referral to the services explained below. Additional employment-related services targeted at newcomers include, but are not limited to: employment counselling, job search workshops, resume screening and referrals to employers, mentorship and networking opportunities, internship placements, and preparation for obtaining required equivalences of foreign credentials and/or trade documents. There are also complementary programs funded by provinces and territories.

Another tool to assist in finding employment in Canada is *Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Planning to Work in Canada: An Essential Workbook for Newcomers.*

A portion of Settlement Program funding is spent on directly engaging with Canadian employers on the benefits of a diverse workforce and matching employers' skills needs to newcomers.

There are also activities in Canada to connect refugees with local support and social networks, to provide opportunities for labour market integration and cross-cultural interaction, as well as to encourage informal practice of language skills. Examples include:

- Opportunities to learn about Canadian ways of life and foster inter-cultural communication and understanding;
- Sports and recreation events, visits to important local sites and cultural celebrations;
- Conversation circles to support language learning;
- Youth leadership, peer support activities, homework clubs and after school programs to develop life skills, community leadership capacity and valuable volunteer experience;
- Mentoring and matching to connect refugees with local support networks, mainstream organizations, and employment-related networks and opportunities; and
- Job placements and internship to provide the "Canadian experience" sought by Canadian employers.

For more information on work in Canada, please consult the following link: www.workingincanada.gc.ca

13.9 Financial Assistance

The Resettlement Assisntance Program is principally used to provide income support to Government-assisted refugees resettled following a UNHCR referral (incuding those matched with a private sponsor in the Blended Visa Office-Referred Program). Some funding is, however, available to certain persons who are admitted to Canada under public policy considerations established by the Minister and who are provided assistance for humanitarian reasons. The Resettlement Assistance Program offers income support that is comparable to social assistance offered by the provinces.

Resettlement Assistance Program's financial assistance for the basic needs (food, clothing, and shelter) is available for up to 12 months after the refugee's arrival, or until s/he becomes self-sufficient, whichever comes first. Assistance may be extended for an additional 12 months for special needs cases processed as a Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) (See S.8.7). In addition, a one-time financial assistance is provided to Government-assisted refugees to assist with initial costs such as aquiring furniture, clothing and household items.

Privately sponsored refugees receive financial assistance from their sponsor (See S.8.6). The goal of the Resettlement Assistance Program and comparable private sponsorship support is to support refugees in their efforts to become self-sufficient as quickly as possible.

13.10 Supplemental support for refugees with specific needs

The specific needs of Government-assisted refugees are considered when Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Refugee Matching Centre determines a final destination within Canada. Whenever possible, survivors of torture or women-at-risk, for example, are resettled to centers with related available support. High needs Government'assisted refugees may have access to financial assistance to pay for travel and/or medical exam costs associated with resettlement to Canada. In addition, Government-assisted refugees with special dietary requirements due to a health condition may be eligible for an additional allowance as part of their Resettlement Assistance Program monthly income assistance.

Life skills support for high-needs refugees

Resettlement Assistance Program funds the provision of intensive life skills support to to high needs Government-assisted refugees after their arrival and once they have moved into their new community. Life skills workers provide culturally appropriate help with basic life skills in the refugee's own language. Help may also be provided for using appliances, budgeting, Canadian cultural orientation and other needs.

13.11 Mechanisms to share information with service providers; including details on expected populations, specific cases and integration issues

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Refugee Matching Centre ensures critical information (e.g., refugee needs, arrival itineraries, etc.) is provided to the in-Canada resettlement network to ensure an efficient and nationally coordinated refugee resettlement movement. When available, cultural profiles of expected populations are also shared. To assist Resettlement Assistance Program Service Providers in planning and managing refugee arrivals to Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada shares short, medium and long term arrival projections.

In addition, Form IMM5544 "The Supplemental Medical and Resettlement Form" is filled out by Immigration Medical Examiners and is used to identify health-related issues early. It is also used by the Matching Centre to ensure that refugees are resettled in areas where their medical needs can be met. Form IMM5544 is not shared with in-Canada Service Providers or sponsors due to privacy restrictions; however, any relevant information it contains with respect to immediate settlement needs is shared.

13.12 Other Services

Support Services are offered across the Settlement Program to enable access to settlement programs and services, including: child care, transportation assistance, translation, interpretation, crisis counselling and provisions for disabilities.

Interpretation and Translation

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada funds interpretation services to assist refugees in their day to day activities, such as accessing settlement and community-based

supports, translation services for documents related to orientation, needs assessments and referrals, and information regarding employment and language training.

Crisis Counselling

Non-therapeutic services (identifying needs, determining how to meet those needs, and helping the newcomer get help) are available to refugees having difficulties adjusting to life in Canada.

Child Care

Includes onsite care within settlement agencies, governed by *Care for Newcomer Children Requirements* or purchased seats in child care facilities that enable newcomer parents to attend both short and long term settlement programming.

Transportation

Includes costs for bus tickets, bus passes, and on an exceptional basis, taxi fares. Where no public transportation is available, shuttle services are offered on a case by case basis.

Provisions for Disabilities

Includes equipment provisions up to and including \$1,000 such as hearing aids, non-equipment provisions and arrangements for people with a disability (such as special training materials and software), as well as interpretation costs to support communication between the deaf or hearing-impaired clients and service providers.

14. Family Reunification of Refugees

14.1 Definition of family within the Canadian resettlement program context

For the purpose of refugee resettlement and refugee asylum, family members are spouses, common-law partners, dependent children of the principal applicant, spouse or common-law partner, and dependent children of the principal applicant's or the spouse's or common-law partner's dependent children.

In addition, in the Resettlement Program, administrative guidelines allow the inclusion of individuals who do not meet the legal definition of family member but who are emotionally or economically dependent on the family unit. These individuals are called *de facto* dependants. It is important to note that even when a relationship of dependency is established, *de facto* dependants must meet the definition of refugee in their own right.

An example of a *de facto* dependant would be an elderly relative who has always lived with the family. Canadian visa officers are asked to use their discretion and make every effort to keep refugee families together at the time of selection.

14.2 Legislation regarding family reunification & eligibility

One of the objectives of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* is to keep families together and where not possible, reunite them in Canada as quickly as possible. In order to facilitate the expeditious reunification of families, the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program allows for the concurrent processing of refugee families if members of the same family are located in separate countries.

At times, however, a family member's whereabouts are not known or conditions in the country of residence will prohibit the application of family members from being processed concurrently with that of the principal applicant. In these cases, the "one-year window" regulations allow separated family members to be resettled under the same class as the principal applicant (i.e., as a refugee) and to apply without the need for a family class sponsorship (see Section 14.7 below). Individuals who make a successful claim in Canada and are recognized as a "Protected Person" in Canada also benefit from concurrent processing of family members' applications overseas.

Eligibility

Resettled Refugees chosen overseas: For separated family members to qualify for one-year window processing, the principal applicant must have identified family members on his/her application for permanent residence (IMM0008) prior to departure for Canada. In addition, the family members must subsequently submit their own application for permanent residence to a visa office within one year from the date the principal applicant arrived in Canada. It is therefore very important that all immediate family members be identified on the principal applicant's application even if their present location is unknown or they are thought to be deceased. As a result, visa officers abroad counsel refugees at the interview to list all their dependants on their IMM 0008, including those who are accompanying, non-accompanying, missing (whereabouts unknown), or thought to be deceased.

De facto dependants of refugees do not qualify under the one-year-winder. However, they may qualify as refugees in their own right or may be sponsored under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program.

Persons granted asylum in Canada: To qualify concurrent processing of family members' applications overseas, the principal applicant must identify family members on his/her Permanent Residence application submitted in Canada. The family members who are not accompanying the principal applicant but who are included on the principal applicant's application for Permanent Residence may submit an application for Permanent Residence at a visa office within one year from the date the principal applicant becomes a Permanent Resident of Canada. It is therefore very important that all immediate family members be identified on the principal applicant's application even if their present location is unknown.

14.3 Details on whether family reunification cases are counted within the resettlement quotas

When one-year window cases are processed overseas, they are counted towards the Government-assisted or privately-sponsored refugee target for that visa office in the year they were processed, depending on which category the principal applicant was resettled under.

14.4 Routing of submissions/Case Documentation

Upon receipt of the "Request to process following family members under the One-Year Window of Opportunity Provisions" [IMM 5571] from the principal applicant, the local office screens the identified family members for eligibility and, if necessary, sends any queries to the visa office which issued the Principal Applicant's permanent residence visa.

Where family members are found not to meet eligibility criteria, the local office sends a letter to the Principal Applicant explaining why particular family members listed on the request form were found to be ineligible and advising them that applications for permanent residence in Canada cannot be submitted for these individuals under the one-year window.

Where family members are found to meet eligibility criteria, the local office sends a letter to the Principal Ppplicant indicating that their family members have been found to be eligible for the one-year window and instructing them to send copies of the application for permanent residence directly to their eligible family members abroad. The Principal Applicant is reminded to instruct their family members to ensure that the completed application is submitted to the appropriate visa office within the one-year window period. This period starts on the day of arrival of the principal applicant in Canada.

14.5 Processing times

Processing times for applications vary greatly among visa offices depending on their geographic location, caseload inventory, medical and health issues prevalent among particular refugee populations, processing capacity and communication infrastructure. In

the event of a UPP case, the Canadian visa office should be informed at the time the application is submitted so that processing may be expedited. The following link provides information on general processing time for UNHCR referred cases: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/times/perm/ref-government.asp

14.6 Entitlements for family members including travel assistance, status on arrival, and support on arrival

Financial Assistance

In the case of **Government-assisted refugees**, family members of the Principal Applicant are not automatically eligible for financial assistance under the Resettlement Assistance Program. Rather, an eligibility assessment based on the total family income will be undertaken by the local office upon the family member's arrival in Canada. **Blended visa office-referred refugees** are assessed in the same way and receive the same monthly entitlements under the Resettlement Assistance Program as Government-assisted refugees for up to a six month period (other six months provided by the sponsor), except for start-up costs.

In the case of **privately sponsored refugees**, the visa offices abroad are instructed to ensure that any family members identified on the Principal Applicant's application have also been included in the sponsoring group's undertaking. If the sponsoring group refuses to add the non-accompanying family members to the undertaking and does not find another sponsoring group for the family members, then the sponsorship application is likely to be refused as the necessary sponsorship supports (including income support) would not be in place.

Status on Arrival

Status on arrival is the same as that of the Principal Applicant (see S.13).

Travel

Travel arrangements are the same as those for the Principal Applicant (see S.12).

14.7 Other immigration channels available for family reunification

Under the **Family Class category**, a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada (including resettled refugees) can sponsor their spouse, common-law partner, conjugal partner, dependent child (including adopted child) or other eligible relative (such as a parent or grandparent) to become a permanent resident.

If the resettled refugee sponsors a relative to come to Canada as a permanent resident under the Family Class, he/she would be responsible for supporting that relative financially when the relative arrives. As a sponsor, the person must make sure that their spouse or relative does not need to seek financial assistance from the Government of Canada.

After the family member has had his/her eligibility interview, the relevant visa office will conduct the required admissibility checks. Once eligibility and admissibility assessments are complete and finalized, the family member travels to Canada and obtains the status of Permanent Resident upon arrival in Canada.

For more information on the family class, please consult the following link: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/sponsor/index.asp

Under the **Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program**, groups in Canada can sponsor refugees for resettlement to Canada. Sponsors are able to "name" or identify the refugee they would like to sponsor and in some cases, the refugee sponsored has a familial link to Canada. This program provides an important outlet for family reunification requests where the family relation is also a refugee. Private sponsors provide financial and emotional support for the refugees for the duration of the sponsorship, typically for one year.

15. References/Resources

The following documents may be obtained through Canadian Visa Offices or by visiting the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship website www.cic.gc.ca:

- Manual on Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes (OP 5);
- In-Canada Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad and Members of the Humanitarian Protected Persons Abroad Classes (IP3); and
- Immigration and Refugee Board Guidelines on Women Refugee Claimants Fearing Gender-Related Persecution.

Websites

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada: www.cic.gc.ca

Immigration and Refugee Board: www.irb.gc.ca

Ministre de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion (Québec): www.midi.gouv.qc.ca