

### Important Updates from IRB for Refugee Claimants:

#### **Postponements of in-person hearings**

- Effective March 17th, hearings are postponed until Monday, May 4, 2020
- Postponed hearings will be rescheduled as soon as possible when the IRB is back up and running

#### **Increased Flexibility at the Refugee Protection Division and Refugee Appeal Division**

- If you need to submit your BOC to apply for refugee status, the IRB is granting an extension on the 14-day requirement
- If you need to submit your appeal request, the IRB is granting an extension on the 14-day requirement
- Exact extension time has not been determined, as the IRB is monitoring COVID-19 and making decisions as time goes on

For updates on the IRB, please visit the following website: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/news/2020/Pages/default.aspx>

### Important Updates from IRCC for Convention Refugees & Permanent Residents:

IRCC is continuing to accept applications for work permits, study permits, permanent residency and citizenship, but processing times may be delayed. The deadlines for applications have been extended by **90 days**. The posted processing times on the IRCC website may not be accurate, as a result. Check this link for further updates: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-covid19.html>

No applications in progress will be closed or refused because of missing documentation or inability to complete the application process in time (such as awaiting for biometrics or immigration medical exam); these requirements will be paused until travel reopens.

IRCC has cancelled all in-person interviews until April 13, 2020. Check the IRCC website to see if this date changes.

This includes landing interviews, citizenship ceremonies and citizenship tests, refugee claimant eligibility interviews and initial interviews to start an inland refugee claim. IRCC will contact you to let you know when your new appointment will be. Make sure that IRCC has your correct contact information.

***Implied status:*** Expired or soon to expire temporary residents (people who are in Canada with a work permit or study permit) are encouraged to apply to extend their status online. Those who have applied to extend their status are allowed to remain in Canada until a decision is made on the extension, even if their initial status expires during this waiting time. However, these individuals should not travel, even for immigration services, because these services have been discontinued until further notice.

#### **IRCC - Client Support Centre Services**

24/7 | 1-888-242-2100 | TTY: 1-888-576-8502 (8:00am-4:00pm your local time)

You can listen to pre-recorded information about our programs and check the status of your application. Client Support Centre agents are available Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., your local time, except for statutory holidays. Services are available in French and English.

### Important Updates from Service Ontario for Convention Refugees and Permanent Residents:

Service Ontario has extended the validation dates of expired and expiring driver's licences, health cards (OHIP), Ontario Photo Cards, licence plat stickers and many more services. You do not need to renew at this time. Individuals and families are encouraged not to attend a Service Ontario centre unless absolutely necessary. Consider applying online. If you are waiting for the new ID to arrive in the mail, please expect delays as Service Ontario practices social distancing to protect their staff during this time.

**OHIP (Ontario Health Insurance Plan)** - The provincial government recently announced that it is waiving the 3-month waiting period for OHIP coverage, which would impact new Convention Refugees and newly landed Permanent Residents who usually have to wait 3-months before applying for and having access to provincial healthcare coverage.

\* Anyone in Ontario can now access free testing & treatment for COVID-19, regardless of their immigration status.

### Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)

CERB provides temporary financial support (\$2000 every 4 weeks, for up to 16 weeks) to residents of Canada (over the age of 15) who have had to stop working for a minimum of 14 consecutive days (in a 4-week period) because of COVID-19, including anyone who:

- is sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19,
- has had to self-isolate because of travel or exposure to COVID-19,
- is taking care of someone who is sick with COVID-19,
- has had to stay home with children because of school / daycare closures due to COVID-19, OR
- has lost their job because of shortage of work created by COVID-19

Refugee claimants, convention refugees, permanent residents, migrant workers and international students are eligible to apply for CERB, if they:

1. currently live in Canada
2. have a valid work permit (up to the last date of employment or self-employment),
3. have a SIN card,
4. earned a minimum of \$5000 in 2019 or in the last 12 months, including any income earned outside of Canada (with documentation to prove international income / earnings)
5. are not currently receiving Employment Insurance benefits, AND
6. have not quit their job

For more details, you can read The 519's resource called "[Taxes and Financial Assistance Info](#)".

You can also visit the [Government of Canada's website](#) for more information and to apply online.

### LGBTQ-positive Settlement Services (info / referrals) available by Phone / Online:

#### **Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP)**

Abhi (Education & Outreach): 416-768-1548  
Awas (Education & Outreach): 416-824-6271  
Shaz (Support Team): 416-821-6582  
Chhiring (Support Team): 416-821-3670

#### **Catholic Cross-Cultural Services**

416-757-7399 | [www.cathcrosscultural.org](http://www.cathcrosscultural.org)

#### **CultureLink Settlement Services**

416-588-6288 | [www.culturelink.ca](http://www.culturelink.ca) |  
[reception@culturelink.ca](mailto:reception@culturelink.ca)

#### **Griffin Centre's ReachOUT Newcomer Network**

*(for LGBTQ2S+ youth)*  
416-222-1153

#### **Kababayan Multicultural Centre**

416-532-3888 | [www.kababayan.org](http://www.kababayan.org)

#### **MCIS Language Solutions**

*(interpretation & translation services)*  
416-467-3097 | [www.mcislanguages.com](http://www.mcislanguages.com)

#### **North York Community House**

416-784-0920 | [www.nych.ca](http://www.nych.ca)

#### **Salaam**

*(online spiritual gatherings available to LGBTQ+ Muslims and folks who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity, their families and friends)*  
[salaamtoronto@gmail.com](mailto:salaamtoronto@gmail.com)

#### **Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention (Black-CAP)**

647-458-1827

#### **Centre for Immigrant and Community Services**

416-293-4565, extension 120 | [settlement@cicscanada.com](mailto:settlement@cicscanada.com)

#### **FCJ Refugee Centre**

416-469-9754 | [www.fcjrefugeecentre.org](http://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org)

#### **Immigrant Youth Centre**

905-294-8868 | [www.cicsiyc.org](http://www.cicsiyc.org)

#### **Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto**

*(online affirming spiritual gatherings and online LGBTQ-affirming refugee programs available)*  
416-406-6228 | [Refugee@MCCToronto.com](mailto:Refugee@MCCToronto.com)

#### **Newcomer Centre of Peel**

905-306-0577 | [info@ncpeel.ca](mailto:info@ncpeel.ca) | [www.ncpeel.ca](http://www.ncpeel.ca)

#### **Parkdale Intercultural Association**

416-536-4429 | [www.piaparkdale.com](http://www.piaparkdale.com)

#### **Skills for Change**

*(online options available for immigrants and refugees to access learning, training and mentorship opportunities, language skills training and employment services)*  
416-658-3101 | [www.skillsforchange.org](http://www.skillsforchange.org)

### **Talk English Café – Acces Employment**

*(practice English conversation through online group chats, up to 3 times per week)*

<https://accesemployment.ca/talk-english-cafe>

Online workshops for new Canadians to help with job search, preparing for job interviews, networking and building your professional brand:

<https://accesemployment.ca/online-event-series>

### **TNO- The Neighbourhood Organization**

416-467-0126 | <https://tno-toronto.org>

### **West Neighbourhood House**

416-532-4828 | [www.westnh.org](http://www.westnh.org)

### **YMCA Newcomer Information Centre**

416-968-9622 | [immigrantservices@ymcagta.org](mailto:immigrantservices@ymcagta.org)

## Online Resources:

**Government of Ontario** - Services for Newcomers and Refugees in Ontario

[www.ontario.ca/page/services-newcomers-and-refugees#section-0](http://www.ontario.ca/page/services-newcomers-and-refugees#section-0)

**Settlement.Org – Services in Toronto:** Newcomer Services List in Toronto

[settlement.org/findhelp/ontario/toronto/settlement-services/](http://settlement.org/findhelp/ontario/toronto/settlement-services/)