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Assistance for Government-Sponsored Refugees, Chosen Abroad

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***Assistance for Government-Sponsored Refugees,
Chosen Abroad***
(In Brief)

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2	WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR HUMANITARIAN RESETTLEMENT IN CANADA?	1
3	THE RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.....	1
3.1	Income Support Eligibility.....	2
3.2	The Amount of Assistance Provided.....	2
3.3	The Income Support Agreement.....	4
4	STATISTICS.....	4
APPENDIX – RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AGREEMENT FOR INCOME SUPPORT RECIPIENTS		

ASSISTANCE FOR GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED REFUGEES, CHOSEN ABROAD*

1 INTRODUCTION

For many years, Canada has fostered the resettlement of refugees and those in refugee-like situations through government sponsorship. Officials with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) working abroad identify individuals who are in need of Canada's help and who are likely to be able to establish themselves successfully in Canada. In most cases, a referral from the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is required before an applicant will be considered.

Two other categories of refugees also exist. Privately sponsored refugees are assisted by groups of Canadians or by organizations with an agreement with CIC. As well, many people arrive in Canada and make inland refugee claims. This paper concerns solely the first category of refugees mentioned, government-sponsored (or government-assisted) refugees, and their potential entitlements.¹

2 WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR HUMANITARIAN RESETTLEMENT IN CANADA?

Currently, there are two subcategories of government-sponsored refugees or people in similar situations who may be admitted to Canada as permanent residents on humanitarian grounds.² These two groups are:

- The Convention Refugees Abroad Class – Members of this class must be in need of resettlement (that is, there is no reasonable prospect now or in the near future of another permanent solution for them) and must meet the definition of Convention refugee: they must be outside their own country and have a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, political opinion, nationality or membership in a particular group.³
- The Country of Asylum Class – Members of this class must be in need of resettlement, be outside their own country and must have been, and continue to be, seriously and personally affected by civil war, armed conflict or a massive violation of human rights. In essence, the class addresses people in refugee-like situations who do not qualify as Convention refugees.

3 THE RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Government assistance to refugees selected overseas is provided through the resettlement assistance program (RAP), which has two components. First, CIC provides funding to service-providing organizations for direct services, such as initial reception, orientation and assistance with finding permanent accommodation, navigating the new community, shopping and other basic life skills. The second component consists of income supports for eligible refugees, explained in detail below.

3.1 INCOME SUPPORT ELIGIBILITY

To be entitled to income support, an individual must be selected to come to Canada as a government-sponsored refugee under one of the subcategories set out above. It must be determined that he or she has insufficient funds to meet basic needs – food, rent, clothing and household effects – and must also commit either to directly enter the work force or to enrol in employment or language training programs. Eligible newcomers are generally provided assistance for a maximum of 12 months. However, up to 24 months may be authorized in special circumstances or for special-needs cases that have been assessed abroad.

CIC makes it clear to program beneficiaries that income support is not an automatic benefit, but rather a privilege that carries with it an obligation on the part of the recipient to make serious efforts to become self-sufficient. According to the department, assistance may be refused, reduced or discontinued in the following cases:

- refusal, without just cause, to take advantage of training or services recommended by CIC;
- refusal, without valid reasons, to actively seek work or accept any reasonable job offer;
- quitting a job without just cause;
- receipt of employment income by any member of the family beyond that allowable under the program guidelines;
- possession of assets beyond those normally possessed by persons requiring financial assistance; or
- a change in the family situation or living arrangements such as marriage, family breakdown, death, birth, someone leaving Canada or new family members arriving.

3.2 THE AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED⁴

Recipients are given an initial start-up cheque for clothing, household items, bedding, staples, telephone installation and furniture. In lieu of money, the actual goods may be provided. The cheque also includes loans for the last month's rent, utility deposits and telephone deposit. In addition, one month's living allowance is provided, which includes funds for food, transportation, incidentals and rent.

For basic household needs, a one-time payment is provided as follows:

- \$1,330 per single recipient without accompanying dependants
- \$2,340 per single recipient plus 1 dependant
- \$2,665 per single recipient plus 2 dependants
- \$1,960 per couple without accompanying dependants
- \$2,455 per couple plus 1 dependant

ASSISTANCE FOR GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED REFUGEES, CHOSEN ABROAD

- \$2,945 per couple plus 2 dependants
- \$3,515 per couple plus 3 dependants
- \$350 for each additional dependant

The special allowances that may be provided include the following:

- Clothing allowance (basic)
 - \$325 per adult
 - \$250 per child
- Clothing allowance (winter)
 - \$175 per adult
 - \$125 per child
- School start-up
 - \$150 per child
- Special diet allowance
 - \$100/month
- Newborn allowance
 - \$750
- Maternity allowance
 - \$200/clothing
 - \$75/month for up to 9 months
- Children under 6 years old
 - \$50/month
- Transportation allowance
 - \$50/month per adult
- School allowance
 - \$20/month per school-age child and young adult attending kindergarten to grade 12
- Funeral/burial expenses
 - To be determined by the CIC RAP officers

In addition to the start-up allowance and special allowances, RAP includes monthly allowances for basic food, shelter and other expenses, such as bus passes and school fees. Under the program, the food and shelter portion of the income support money is guided by the maximum prevailing social assistance rates within the province or territory of residence. In Ontario, for example, a single individual would receive a shelter allowance of \$368 and a basic needs allowance of \$224, for a total of \$592 a month.⁵ Government-sponsored refugees are not eligible to receive provincial social assistance benefits while receiving RAP income support.

3.3 THE INCOME SUPPORT AGREEMENT

In order to receive income support, clients must sign an Income Support Agreement. They are required to show that they understand the terms and conditions of the agreement before being given their first cheque. A copy of the standard agreement is included as an appendix to this paper.

4 STATISTICS

The Canadian government provides financial support and immediate essential services for thousands of refugees annually. Recent figures for government-sponsored refugees are as follows:

Government-Sponsored Refugees: Intake, 2005–2010

Year	Number of Government Sponsored Refugees	Percentage of Overall Refugee Class ^a
2005	7,424	20.75
2006	7,326	22.54
2007	7,572	27.09
2008	7,295	33.37
2009	7,425	32.49
2010	7,264	29.41

- a. The overall refugee class includes government-sponsored refugees, privately sponsored refugees, refugees landed in Canada, and dependants of refugees abroad who are granted permanent resident status.

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, "[Canada – Permanent residents by category, 2006–2010](#)," *Summary tables – Permanent and temporary residents, 2010*.

NOTES

- * A previous version of this document was prepared by Benjamin R. Dolin, formerly of the Library of Parliament.
1. For information on inland claimants, see Julie Béchar and Sandra Elgersma, [Refugee Protection in Canada](#), Publication no. 2011-90-E, Parliamentary Information and Research Service, Library of Parliament, Ottawa, 1 September 2011.
 2. A third subcategory, the Source Country Class, was repealed in March 2011 because, according to Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC], "it was not working as it was intended." See CIC, "[News Release – Government to Refocus Resettlement Efforts](#)," Ottawa, 18 March 2011.
 3. See the United Nations [Convention relating to the Status of Refugees](#), Article 1, and the United Nations [Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees](#), Article 1.
 4. CIC, [IP3 – In-Canada Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad and Members of the Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad Classes: Part 2 \(Resettlement Assistance Program\)](#), 7 October 2011.
 5. [Ontario Works Regulations](#), O. Reg. 347/11, ss. 41(1) and 42(1).

APPENDIX – RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AGREEMENT FOR INCOME SUPPORT RECIPIENTS

Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) Agreement for Income Support Recipients

The Government of Canada, through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), provides financial assistance to eligible newcomers for the basic need of life. As an eligible recipient of income support benefits under RAP, you may receive financial assistance from the Government of Canada under the terms and conditions listed below for a maximum of _____ months from your date of arrival in Canada until _____ or until you are financially self-sufficient, whichever comes first. Income support is not an automatic benefit program and can be refused, discontinued or reduced if the conditions listed below are not met.

While receiving Income Support under the Resettlement Assistance Program,

I, _____, born on _____ having FOSS ID number _____
(Print full name) (MM/DD/YY)

and my spouse (if applicable)

I, _____, born on _____ having FOSS ID number _____
(Print full name) (MM/DD/YY)

on behalf of myself and my/our dependent family members, agree to the following terms and conditions:

1. I will declare to Citizenship and Immigration Canada all my funds and assets and the funds and assets of my dependent family members presently in our possession or which will follow at a later date.
2. I and my dependent family members will report all income or benefits received from **any** source, including but not limited to casual, part-time or full-time employment, employment insurance benefits, worker's compensation benefits, training allowances, student loans, scholarships, grants and bursaries, and social assistance payments by completing a Change of Status Form and submitting it to the Citizenship and Immigration Canada Centre a _____. Failure to report could result in being charged with fraud under the Criminal Code of Canada.
3. I will immediately report **any** of the following changes to Citizenship and Immigration Canada: address change (1 month before moving), pregnancy, birth of a baby, commencement of paid work, employment change, commencement of training or change of schools, death of a family member, incarceration, hospitalization, name change, change in family composition, including a change in marital status or common law relationship, and departure from Canada by completing a Change of Status Form and submitting it to the Citizenship and Immigration Canada Centre at: _____.
4. I understand that departure from Canada for an extended period of time may impact my RAP benefits, as well as the RAP benefits of dependent family members that remain in Canada. I will report any confirmed travel by completing a Change of Status form and submitting it to the Citizenship and Immigration Canada Centre.
5. I will pursue opportunities that will contribute to my becoming self-sufficient (e.g. language training classes, college or university courses, language training classes, employment preparation programs) or I will actively seek work and be available for work at all times. I will not refuse any reasonable offer of employment or abandon employment without just cause. I will not limit myself to employment in my normal occupation but will be willing to consider all available jobs.
6. I agree to promptly repay any RAP benefits given to me which exceed the amount to which I am properly entitled and I authorize Citizenship and Immigration Canada to arrange repayment either through payroll deduction with my employer or through recovery of my RAP income support.
7. I understand that if I relocate, I am responsible for paying all moving costs and meeting any and all commitments with local landlords. I am not entitled to temporary accommodation in another city nor will any of the assistance I have already received be duplicated.
8. In the case of voluntary repatriation, I authorize Citizenship and Immigration Canada to release my date of departure from Canada to the Canada Revenue Agency for the purpose of income support-related programs administered by that Department.
9. I consent to the disclosure and/or use of personal information dealing with either myself or members of my dependants for the purpose of assisting in our resettlement and adaptation to Canada, specifically to those settlement agencies and Canadian government authorities involved in our resettlement process.
10. I acknowledge that the above information was fully explained to me to my complete satisfaction by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, my RAP SPO Counsellor or through an interpreter and I fully understand the contents. I understand that it is a criminal offence to make any false statements regarding my eligibility for the Resettlement Assistance Program and that should I fail to comply with this agreement or knowingly defraud the Government of Canada, I may be subject to criminal prosecution.
11. I acknowledge I was given a copy of this document.

Accepted and agreed to this _____ day of _____, 20____, in the City of _____.

Recipient

Spouse of Recipient

CIC RAP Officer

RAP SPO Counsellor (if present)

Interpreter (if used)

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, "[Resettlement Assistance Program \(RAP\) Agreement for Income Support Recipients](#)," Appendix B, Annex 2, in *IP 3 – In Canada Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad and Members of the Humanitarian Protected Persons Abroad Classes: Appendices*, 30 April 2010.