

Welcome the Stranger

MCC Manitoba Blended Visa Office Referral (BVOR)



MCC is excited to be able to partner with you and the Canadian government in Blended Visa Office Referral (BVOR) refugee sponsorships. Through the BVOR program, a sponsoring group (that's you!) is matched with a refugee family and commits to providing 12 months of social, emotional, and settlement support*, with half of the costs covered by the Canadian government.

These families have already been approved by the Canadian government and are waiting for a sponsoring group to enable them to come to Canada. This makes the timeline for arrivals much faster than through private sponsorship – it could be as little as a matter of weeks.

Still have questions? Or are you ready to get started? Our FAQ has lots of helpful information to guide you and your group as you consider or begin the process of sponsorship a refugee family. You can also contact MCC Manitoba's BVOR Program Associate, Erin Morash at 204-261-6381, erinmorash@mccmb.ca.

**MCCM has a Catalyst Fund to cover the 50% private cost portion for groups who would like to sponsor refugees through the BVOR program. This means that the full cost of sponsorship could be covered by the government and the Catalyst Fund.*

What is the Blended VOR Program?

The Blended Visa Office Referred initiative is a program designed to resettle refugees identified by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and submitted to Canadian visa offices abroad. It is referred to as a “blended” program because it is a cost-sharing arrangement whereby the government and sponsorship groups both contribute to financially supporting the refugees.

Refugees under this program have already met eligibility and admissibility criteria, making them travel-ready. However, they must be matched with a sponsor before they can travel to Canada.

How does the “blended” model work?

Refugees resettled under the Blended VOR Program will receive income support after their arrival (from months 2-7) through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). They are also fully covered under the Interim Federal Health (IFH) Program in addition to provincial health coverage.

For the duration of the sponsorship period, sponsors are required to provide:

- Reception upon arrival
- Initial housing setup that meets their needs
- Financial support
- Settlement Assistance (including arranging for language classes, enrollment in school, finding health care providers, job search, etc.)
- Psychological and emotional support

Who will be sponsored under this program?

The focus for this year will be on some of the following populations:

- MIDDLE EAST: Iraq, Iran and Syria
- AFRICA: Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan and Somalia

Can refugees be referred to the Blended VOR Program by sponsoring groups?

No. Refugees chosen under this program can only be referred to Canadian visa offices by the UNHCR

How is this different from the regular Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program?

Blended VOR

- Refugees are identified by the UNHCR and Canadian visa offices, then referred to MCC for matching with sponsorship groups
- Refugees have already been pre-screened for eligibility and admissibility
- Refugees are travel ready – once matched with a sponsorship group, they can arrive within 1-4 months
- Cost Sharing – the government provides six months of financial support to meet basic needs

Regular PSR program (also referred to as “named sponsorships”)

- Refugees are identified by sponsors within Canada
- Sponsorship application is submitted in Canada. After approval, the file is sent overseas for processing
- This process can take upwards of a year – timelines vary from one country to another
- Sponsors are responsible for full financial and settlement support for duration of sponsorship



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How soon will the refugees arrive?

Visa office referred cases are normally ready to travel to Canada within one to four months of being matched with a sponsor. However, there have been instances of unforeseen circumstances that have caused delays. These are rare, but they do happen.

What happens after the refugees arrive?

These refugees are considered permanent residents once they arrive in Canada. This means they are legally entitled to work, go to school, receive health care and access free services for newcomers to Canada such as language classes, employment counseling and other support services. Sponsored refugees are eligible for provincial health care immediately.

How do refugees access Government support?

Upon arrival, the government will contact the lead person of your sponsorship group to schedule an intake interview. This intake interview will register the sponsored refugees to receive their government income during months 2-7. If you are not contacted within two weeks of the family's arrival, contact MCC for advice.

Government support is for six months - what about the other six months?

Government income support is for six months. Sponsors assume the costs for the remainder of the sponsorship period (month 1, 8-12.) All other services including IFH coverage remain the same.

What is expected of refugees under this program?

The newly arrived refugee is expected to make every effort to become self-sufficient as soon as possible after arriving in Canada. This includes taking advantage of language classes as well as other settlement services and actively seeking employment. Newly arrived refugees are responsible to repay their travel and medical loans. Upon arrival in Canada, they will receive a letter from government with information about the total cost of the loan as well as a repayment plan.

What is the process of sponsoring refugees under the Blended VOR Program?

MCC selects profiles from available BVOR cases and matches case to sponsoring group preferences

Sponsoring group accepts sponsorship

MCC completes necessary paperwork

MCC submits application to government

Sponsoring group can expect to welcome the refugee family within 1-4 months of submitting application

Questions? Or ready to get started? Contact us:

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<https://mcc.org/resources/mcc-manitoba-welcome-stranger>

