



FCJ Refugee Centre

Walking With Uprooted People

The refugee claimant process in 2023 (Public education workshop)

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Disclaimer: The following is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice!



AGENDA

- The Refugee Claimant Process in 2023
 - Components of a Refugee Claim
 - Inland Refugee Claimants
 - STCA
 - Port of Entry Refugee Claimants
 - Eligibility assessed at POE vs. Eligibility assessment deferred
- Frontline Worker Tips
 - Documentation
 - Legal Aid
 - Work Permits
 - IFHP



Components of a Refugee Claim

- Basis of Claim form (commonly referred to as BOC)
 - Includes basic information about Claimant and their family
 - Best practice is to write “see attached narrative” for questions 2(a) - (h)
- Narrative
 - detailed story setting out why the Claimant is in danger in their country
 - Need to explain who is persecuting them, why the state can’t protect them, and why they can’t escape their persecutors by moving internally
 - Needs to strike a balance between too much detail and not enough
- IRCC Portal/Forms (Generic, Sched. 12 and Sched. A)
 - background info about the Claimant
 - Make sure to tick work permit box!
 - to fill out paper forms in lieu of portal, contact IRCC.RefugeePortalExemption-ExemptionPortailRefugies.IRCC@cic.gc.ca



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Inland Refugee Claim

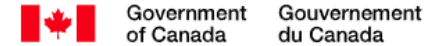


Who makes an inland claim?

- Refugee claimants who are already in Canada!
- In practice, this means individuals who have entered Canada under some other immigration status (tourist visa, study permit, etc.), and people who have crossed into Canada in between official points of entry.
- For the latter, they need to wait at least 14 days before submitting their claim (because of the STCA)

INLAND CLAIMANTS – SUBMITTING THE REFUGEE CLAIM ONLINE

- For Inland claimants, claim is not initiated until portal and attached docs have been submitted.
- Portal MUST be accompanied by completed BOC/Narrative, as well as passport scan and signed Use of Rep (if applicable).
- Applicants will have 90 days to submit a claim once it has been opened on the Portal. For privacy reasons, incomplete claims that are not submitted within 90 days will be deleted.
- If 90 days passes and the claim is deleted, the claimant may start the process again with no penalty.
- While there is no hard deadline for submitting inland claims, excessive delays may cause issues before the RPD.



[Home](#) > [Sign in](#)

Sign in to the IRCC portal

* Email address (required)

* Password (required)

Sign in

Need an account? [Sign up](#)

[Forgot your password?](#)




Date modified: 2022-10-04

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Application Process IRCC Portal/eAPP:

What will happen via the portal:

-  **Completion of forms (basic info, including experience and address history)**
-  **Completion of Basis of Claim form and supporting narrative.**
-  **Upload Passport Scan**



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Inland Claimant Application Process: After Submitting the Portal



The Claimant's legal representative should provide them with the **summary** of their Portal



The Claimant will receive Confirmation of submission



Inland Claimant Application Process: Once Portal is Submitted

Documents that refugee claimant will receive:

Acknowledgment
of claim
document

Medicals Exam
instructions
(Medical form)

- These usually arrive <1 week after portal submitted.



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Acknowledgment of Claim Document (AOC)

- This is a temporary document (white document)
- Confirms the Claimant has made a refugee claim
- Shows that the Claimant is covered under the Interim Federal Health Program
- May allow Claimants to apply for Social Assistance (depending on Province), enroll children in school, etc.

UCI: [REDACTED]

Application Number: [REDACTED]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CLAIM AND NOTICE TO RETURN FOR INTERVIEW

Family Name: [REDACTED]

Given Name: [REDACTED]

Date of Birth: [REDACTED] YYYY/MM/DD

This notice acknowledges that the Government of Canada received your **refugee claim** on [REDACTED] YYYY/MM/DD.

You are now eligible for health care coverage under the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP). You are required to undergo an Immigration Medical Examination as part of your refugee claim. The IFHP will cover the cost of this examination. Please present this notice and your IMM 1017 form to the panel physician at your appointment.

You are required to return for an interview with respect to your refugee claim. The details are as follows:

Date:

Time:

Address:

You must bring the following with you:

- This original appointment letter
- 4 original passport-sized photographs

If you are under 18 years of age, you must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian if he or she resides in Canada.

IMPORTANT:

If you do not appear for your interview, your IFHP coverage may be terminated. In addition, your refugee claim may subsequently be determined to have been abandoned in which case you will be subject to removal from Canada.

Note – If you pay for any medical services or products, you will not be reimbursed.

Health care providers in Canada **MUST** verify the eligibility of the individual with the IFHP claims administrator, Medavie Blue Cross, before providing services. Medavie Blue Cross may be contacted by telephone at 1-888-614-1880, by facsimile at 506-867-4651 or through their website at <https://www.medaviebc.ca/en/health-professionals>.



Inland Claimant Application Process: After Submitting the Portal (Cont.)

- The Claimant must complete their medical in 30 days (IMM1017 form)* (**Follow instructions to find authorized physician**)
- **Medical exam is free!!!** (need to provide Acknowledgement letter)
- The Claimant must wait for work permit to be mailed to their address (**update their address**)
 - This can take several months (or more)
- The Claimant can apply for Social Insurance Number (SIN #) with their work permit and their Acknowledgment of claim at any SERVICE CANADA OFFICE.



Inland Claimant Application Process: The Eligibility Interview

- The Claimant will be contacted by IRCC to attend an in-person biometrics appointment and Eligibility Interview with IRCC (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada) (sometimes there are two separate appointments).
 - It usually takes at least a couple of months to get a date for an eligibility interview, but this can vary.
- At the eligibility interview, IRCC Will confirm that the Claimant is not inadmissible to Canada and is eligible to continue the refugee claim process. Key considerations for most claimants are:
 - Do they have a record of serious criminality?
 - Have they previously made a refugee claim in another “five eyes” country (USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand)?

Inland Claimant Application Process: The Eligibility Interview (Cont.)

- After successfully completing the eligibility interview, the Refugee Claimant will get their Refugee Protection Claimant Document (RPCD), aka the “Brown Paper.”
- They should also receive a document confirming that their case has been referred to the IRB.
- If Claimant is found ineligible, they may be invited to do an “enhanced” PRRA

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada / Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada

PROTECTED WHEN COMPLETED / PROTÉGÉ UNE FOIS REMPLI - B

CANADA

REFUGEE PROTECTION CLAIMANT DOCUMENT
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE PERSON HEREIN IS A REFUGEE PROTECTION CLAIMANT WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

Application No: _____
UCI: _____

CLIENT INFORMATION

Family Name: _____
Given Name(s): _____
Date of Birth: _____ (yyyy/mm/dd)
Sex: _____
Country of Birth: _____
Country of Citizenship: _____
Date Issued: _____ (yyyy/mm/dd)
Expiry Date: _____ (yyyy/mm/dd)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Pursuant to Subsection 100(1) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, this refugee protection claim has been determined to be eligible for a decision by the Refugee Protection Division. Consequently, pursuant to subsection 100(3), the refugee protection claim is referred to the Refugee Protection Division of the Immigration and Refugee Board.

As of 2023/03/23 the above-named individual is eligible for coverage of health-care costs under the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP). This coverage can be cancelled without notice if the individual's immigration status changes. Therefore, health-care providers must verify the eligibility of the individual with the IFHP administrator before providing services.

I, the undersigned:

- declare that I require coverage under the IFHP. I will notify IRCC immediately of any changes to my immigration status, or if I become eligible for or receive other health insurance;
- understand that my medical and personal information will be shared with IRCC, IFHP claims administration and other appropriate third-parties for the administration of the IFHP and that my personal information may be shared with other government institutions and other third-parties in accordance with the Privacy Act and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Act.

School age children do not need student authorization to attend primary or secondary schools.

Name, relationship and signature of accompanying adult (if applicable)

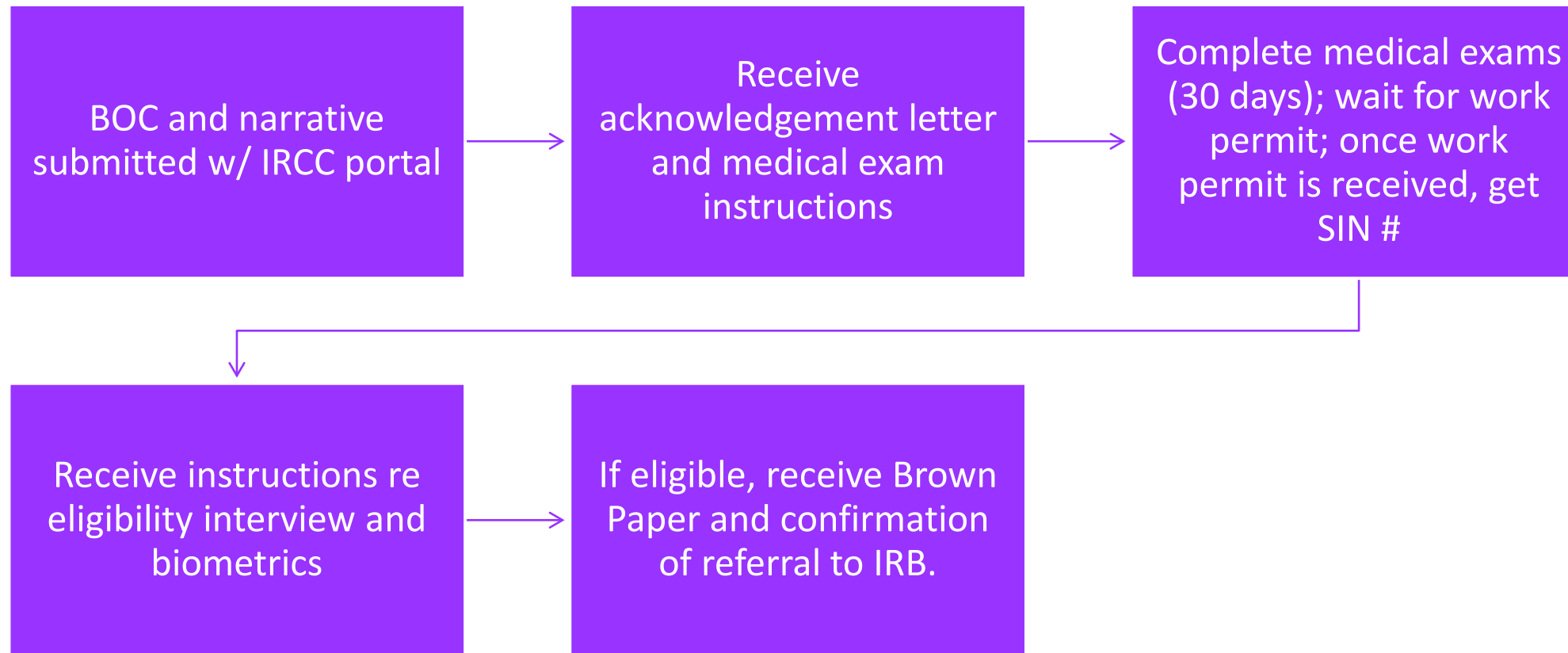
Signature of person concerned Money in possession Minister

NOT VALID FOR TRAVEL

THIS FORM HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED BY THE MINISTER OF IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP CANADA - THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
FORMULAIRE ÉTABLI PAR LE MINISTRE DE L'IMMIGRATION, RÉFUGIÉS ET CITOYENNETÉ CANADA - LE PRÉSENT DOCUMENT EST LA PROPRIÉTÉ DU GOUVERNEMENT DU CANADA

IMM 14429 (1-2019)

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The Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA)



Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA)

- Under the STCA, in force since December 2004, Canada and the US designate each other as “safe” for refugees and establish the principle that, with some exceptions, refugee claimants must seek protection in the first of the two countries they reach. The Agreement was expanded in March 2023 to apply to people who cross the border irregularly (between the Ports of Entry), shutting the famous Roxham Road loophole.
- Because of the STCA, claimants arriving from the US by land or water will be found ineligible to make a claim, unless they meet an exception. People found ineligible under the STCA are almost always immediately returned to the US.
- Since the March 2023 expansion, the Safe Third Country Agreement also applies to people who make a refugee claim within 14 days of entering Canada from the USA by land or water.



STCA Exemptions

- The STCA exempts the person from being returned to the US under the STCA if the person:
 - Has qualifying family members physically present in Canada
 - Is an unaccompanied minor and neither parent (or legal guardian) is in either USA or Canada
 - Has a valid Canadian visa
 - Is a national of a country where visas are not required to enter Canada but are to enter the USA (e.g. Mexican nationals)
 - Is subject to the death penalty



The Family Member Exception: Definitions

- The Safe Third Country Agreement recognizes a family member as the following:
 - spouse
 - legal guardian
 - child
 - father or mother
 - sister or brother
 - grandfather or grandmother
 - grandchild
 - uncle or aunt
 - nephew or niece
 - common-law partner
 - same-sex spouse
- Claimants should bring evidence establishing the relationship.



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Border Refugee Claim (POE-Port of Entry)



Who makes a POE Claim

- POE claims are made at Ports of Entry; in practice, this is usually either at Canada's land border with the US, or at an airport.
- Who makes POE claims? Those who arrive at the airport after flying from their COO with an eTA, visa, etc; Individuals who reach a land border with the USA and who fall under an exception to the Safe Third Country Agreement.



Application Process: Port of Entry claims

- Eligibility determined at POE:
Common at some land borders such as Peace Bridge – (Fort Erie and Niagara) if claimant meets an exception to the safe third country agreement (STCA).





Port Of Entry claimants FOUND ELEGIBLE at POE:

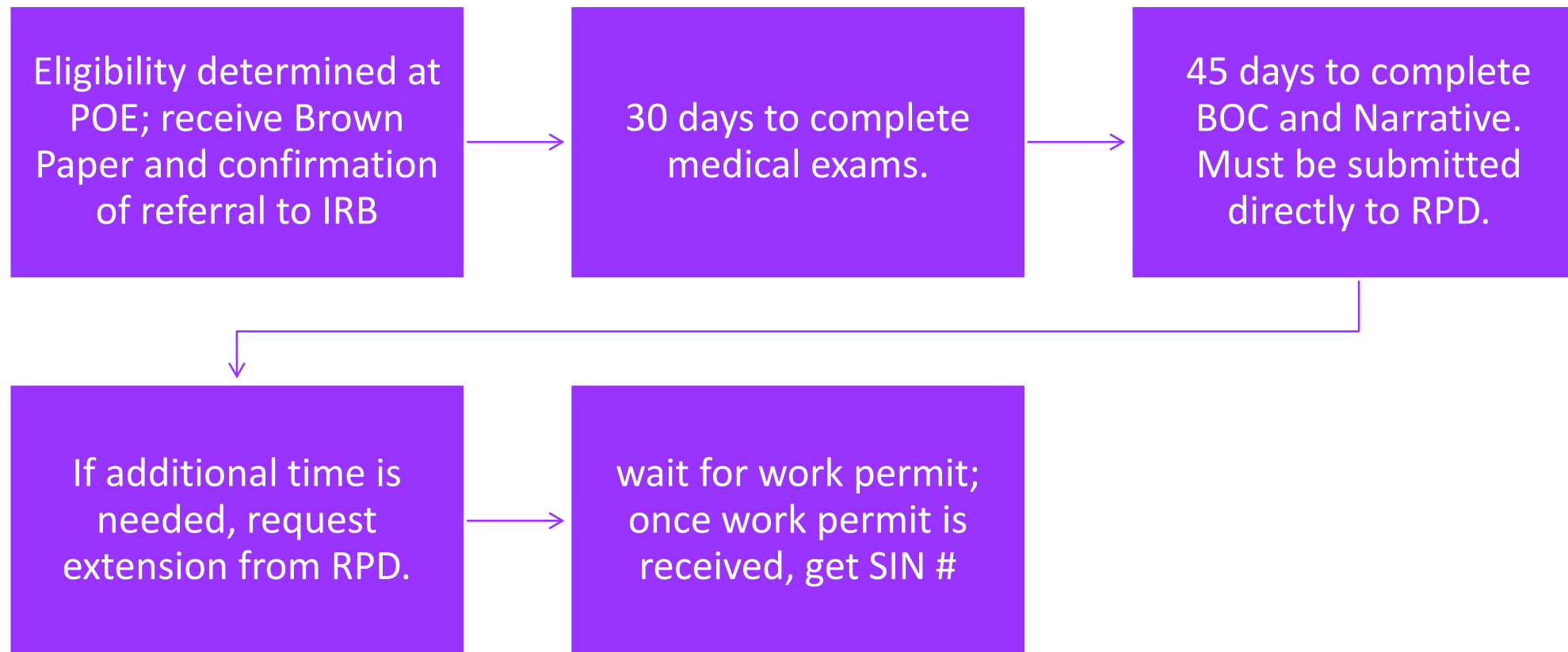
What has been done:

- Completed forms with CBSA (Generic, Schedule 12, Schedule A forms). These are still used in lieu of portal at some POEs.
- Received Refugee Protection Claim Document (Refugee ID/Brown paper)
- Claim referred to Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB)



Port Of Entry claimants FOUND ELEGIBLE at POE:

- TO DO:
- Submit Basis of Claim (BOC) to IRB in 45 days
- Complete medical in 30 days
- Wait for work permit *(if requested on Schedule 12). **the Claimant must update their address.**





POE Claimants whose Eligibility NOT determined at Port of Entry

What has been done:

- Received ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CLAIM DOCUMENT (AOC)
 - Acknowledgement of Claim can be used to access IFHP, OW, etc.
- Received Medical Exam Docs.
- Biometrics



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Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

UOI: [REDACTED]

Applicant Number: [REDACTED]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CLAIM AND NOTICE TO RETURN FOR INTERVIEW

Family Name: [REDACTED]

Given Name: [REDACTED]

Date of Birth: [REDACTED] YYYYMMDD

This notice acknowledges that the Government of Canada received your refugee claim on
[REDACTED] YYYYMMDD.

You are now eligible for health care coverage under the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP). You are required to undergo an Immigration Medical Examination as part of your refugee claim. The IFHP will cover the cost of this examination. Please present this notice and your IMM 1017 form to the panel physician at your appointment.

You are required to return for an interview with respect to your refugee claim. The details are as follows:

Date:

Time:

Address:

You must bring the following with you:

- This original appointment letter
- 4 original passport-sized photographs

If you are under 15 years of age, you must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian if he or she resides in Canada.

IMPORTANT:

If you do not appear for your interview, your IFHP coverage may be terminated. In addition, your refugee claim may subsequently be determined to have been abandoned in which case you will be subject to removal from Canada.

Note – If you pay for any medical services or products, you will not be reimbursed.

Health care providers in Canada MUST verify the eligibility of the individual with the IFHP during admission, Medavie Blue Cross, before providing services. Medavie Blue Cross may be contacted by telephone at 1-888-614-7880, by teletype at 609-867-4651 or through their website at <https://www.medaviebc.ca/en/health-professionals>.

Canada

IMM 989 (11-2014) (0045)



POE Claimants whose Eligibility NOT determined at Port of Entry

- TO DO:
- Complete IRCC portal/eApp: CBSA provides written instructions w/ QR Code
- Needs to be completed within 45 days (although a 30-day extension granted automatically). If extension needed beyond that, contact CBSA at CBSA.Asylum-Asile.ASFC@CBSA-ASFC.gc.ca.
- Complete Medical Exam within 30 days

Steps Required:

Your refugee claim application is **NOT** complete. You must complete your refugee claim application within the next 45 days using the IRCC portal:

1. Obtain an **invitation code** by **confirming your email address** in the web link below:

Web link: <https://ircc.canada.ca/visit-visiter/en/get-account-ircc-portal> or by scanning the QR Code



2. **Copy** your Invitation Code by clicking “Copy to clipboard” and click on “Continue to the IRCC Portal sign-up” page



3. From your **My IRCC portal account**, click: [Make a new refugee claim or continue a claim made to the Canada Border Services Agency \(CBSA\)](#)
4. You will need the **L# and UCI#** found on your **Acknowledgement of Claim OR Refugee Protection Claimant Document** to continue your existing refugee claim.

For information to help you complete the forms and guide you through the application process, see:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides/guide-0192-cbsa-refugee-claims-ircc-portal.html>

IMPORTANT:

Completing the IRCC Portal will provide the Government of Canada an updated address to send your work/study permit(s).

Not completing your refugee claim application will result in delays and your refugee claim may be declared abandoned by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). In addition, you could be subject to enforcement including arrest and removal from Canada.

If you are unable to complete your refugee application using the IRCC Portal, you may send a request for paper forms to CBSA.Asylum-Asile.ASFC@CBSA-ASFC.gc.ca *

*The paper forms requires the completion of forms using Adobe Acrobat 10 (not available on a tablet or mobile phone), and will require a manual review to ensure completion. Incomplete forms will result in delays.



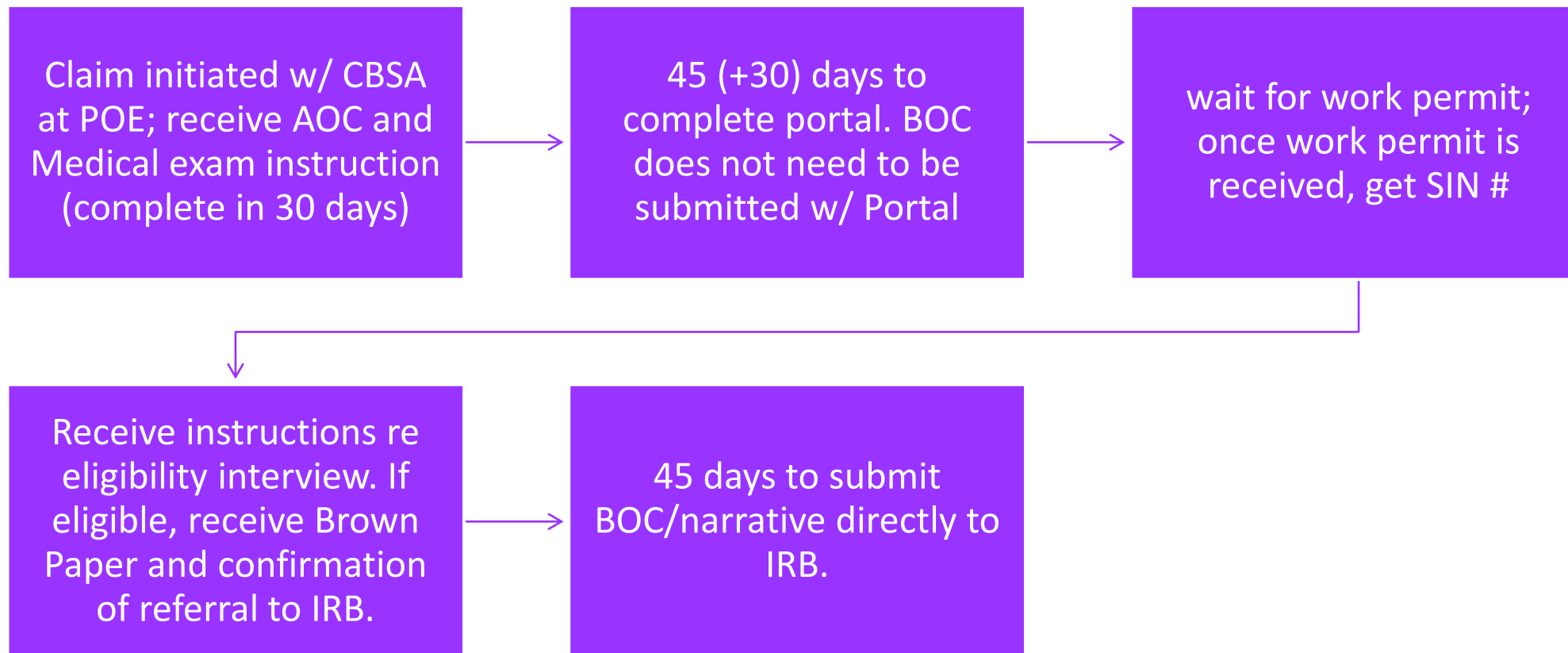
Eligibility NOT determined at Port of Entry

- TO DO cont.:
- Wait for work permit at address listed in the portal *
(Update/report change of address)
- Apply for Social Insurance Number (SIN#) with Acknowledgment of claim and valid work permit
- Check email AND portal for eligibility interview date. It can take several months to receive a date.



Eligibility NOT determined at Port of Entry

- After deferred eligibility interview is completed, the Claimant will receive their Refugee Protection Claimant Document (aka Brown Paper)
- Claim Referred to Immigration and Refugee Board
- The Claimant must submit Basis of claim (BOC) to IRB in 45 days. Extensions are possible, but claimant/counsel must submit a request.





Claimant processed through ONE TOUCH program

- Who may be considered for the one-touch refugee intake process:
 - The claimant's risk has been assessed and the claimant is **NOT** considered "high-risk";
 - The officer sees no issues with the claimant's identity (passport, national ID card, travel document, etc...);
 - The claimant has provided a valid email address (if claimants have an in-Canada address and telephone number those must be collected as well);
 - The claimant is NOT inadmissible for allegations other than non-compliance with seeking to remain in Canada on a permanent basis without first obtaining a permanent resident visa [A41(a), A20(1)(a), R6]; and
 - The claimant is not or will not be detained.



ONE TOUCH program

What has been done:

- Eligibility confirmed
- Claimant has Received Refugee Protection Claimant Document (aka Brown Paper)
- Claim has been referred to Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB)



ONE TOUCH program

To do:

- Submit Basis of Claim (BOC) and narrative to IRB within 45 days
- Complete IRCC portal/eApp (45 days + 30 days)
- Complete medical (30 days)
- Wait for work permit to be mailed
- Apply for Social Insurance Number with Refugee Protection Claimant Document (Brown paper) and valid work permit
- No additional in-person examination required



ONE TOUCH

Your refugee claim application is **NOT** complete. You must complete your refugee claim application within the next 45 days using the IRCC portal:

1. Obtain an invitation code by confirming your email address in the web link below:

Web link: <https://ircc.canada.ca/visit-visitor/en/get-account-ircc-portal> or by scanning the QR Code



2. Copy your Invitation Code by clicking "Copy to clipboard" and click on "Continue to the IRCC Portal sign-up" page:

Get an IRCC Portal account

Your IRCC Portal invitation code is:

[Redacted code]

Your valid until:

[Redacted date]

3. From your My TRCC portal account, click: Make a new refugee claim or continue a claim made to the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)

4. You will need the I# and UCI# found on your refugee protection claimant document to continue your existing refugee claim.

For information to help you complete the forms and guide you through the application process, see: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides/guide-0192-cbsa-refugee-claims-ircc-portal.html>

IMPORTANT:

Completing the IRCC Portal will provide the Government of Canada an updated address to send your work/study permit(s).

You must also submit a completed Basis of Claim (BOC) form to the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) within 45 days.

Not completing your refugee claim application and BOC will result in delays and your refugee claim may be declared abandoned by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). In addition, you could be subject to enforcement including arrest and removal from Canada.

If you are unable to complete your refugee application using the IRCC Portal, you may send a request for paper forms to CBSA.Asylum-Asile.ASFC@CBSA-ASFC.gc.ca*

*The paper forms requires the completion of forms using Adobe Acrobat .ac (not available on a tablet or mobile phone), and will require a manual review to ensure completion. Incomplete forms will result in delays.



Timing: Portal vs. BOC

- For POE claimants whose eligibility is not determined at POE, and for One Touch claimants, they technically do not need to submit Portal and BOC/narrative at the same time. However, it is generally best practice to work on both these things together to ensure consistency.



Summary: Inland vs POE

- Inland: BOC/Narrative and Portal due at same time. No acknowledgement letter (and hence no benefits) until claim submitted via Portal. Processed by IRCC.
- POE: BOC/Narrative and Portal submitted separately. Immediate access to benefits via Acknowledgement letter or Brown Paper. Processed by CBSA.



Change of Address

- Change of Address for individuals who have their acknowledgement of claim document to secure the work permit would arrive to the proper address.
- Web form Link - <https://secure.cic.gc.ca/enquiries-renseignements/canada-case-cas-eng.aspx>
- In the text box the Claimant must input their information that needs being updated, the Claimant must make sure to explain what they are updating (i.e.. Address, phone number, etc.)
- The Claimant must input the requested information in the Applicant Information Section
- If the applicant is the enquirer, select applicant option in the first box and all information will follow

The screenshot shows the Government of Canada website with the 'IRCC Webform' section. The page header includes the Canadian flag, 'Government of Canada', 'Gouvernement du Canada', and a search bar. A navigation menu contains links for Jobs, Immigration, Travel, Business, Benefits, Health, Taxes, and More services. The breadcrumb trail reads: Home → Immigration and citizenship → Help Centre → Application Status → IRCC Webform. The main heading is 'IRCC Webform'. Below it, a red question mark icon is followed by the text: 'If you have a question that is not about a specific case, find the answers you need in the [Help Centre](#).' The section 'You may use this form if:' lists several conditions for using the form, including submitting an application, reporting changes, adding a representative, and urgent processing requirements.

Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

Search Canada.ca

Jobs Immigration Travel Business Benefits Health Taxes More services

Home → Immigration and citizenship → Help Centre → Application Status → IRCC Webform

IRCC Webform

? If you have a question that is not about a specific case, find the answers you need in the [Help Centre](#).

You may use this form if:

- You have **submitted an application or profile**.
- Your application has **exceeded normal processing times**. We will not respond to your enquiry if the application is within [normal processing times](#).
- You wish to report important changes, such as a change in contact information, births, deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, changes in employment, withdrawal of application, refund request, or urgent requests. If you are reporting a change in contact information, it will take **5 business days** for it to be updated. During this time you should **continue to monitor your old contact information**.
- You wish to add, change or cancel a representative and you are ready to upload your [Use of Representative Form](#) (IMM5476) or you authorize IRCC to release information from your case file and you are ready to upload your [Authority to Release Personal Information to a Designated Individual](#) (IMM5475).
- You require urgent processing of your renewal/replacement Permanent Resident card. To be eligible for urgent processing, you must provide:
 - proof of travel (itinerary or ticket) that shows your full name, destination and travel dates;
 - proof of payment for the travel that shows the date you paid, the full amount you paid, and how you paid;
 - a letter explaining the [reason for the urgency](#); and
 - proof of the urgency (e.g. a doctor's note, death certificate, or letter from your employer).
- You wish to report a technical issue with IRCC online services. Please select 'Technical Difficulty' as your application/enquiry type and ensure you provide:
 - type of application (work permit, study permit or visitor record, etc) in the 'Your enquiry' field;
 - approximate date that the application was submitted, if applicable, in the 'Your enquiry' field.
 - complete address (including the postal code) in the 'Your enquiry' field. If the residential address is different from the mailing address, please provide both addresses;
 - Unique Client Identifier (UCI) number / Client ID number, if you have one;
 - online application reference number, if you have one;
 - telephone number. If you have more than one contact number, please provide them all;
 - screenshot(s), if possible.



After Portal and BOC are submitted

- Claimants should receive work permit within a few months, although this varies. Follow up with IRCC if nothing has arrived after ~3 months.
- Claimants will eventually receive a hearing date from the Refugee Protection Division of the IRB, although how long they need to wait varies widely. Don't panic! If you have concerns, you can contact the RPD directly.
- Changes can be made to BOC/Narrative if you notice mistake or new info comes to light. Talk to legal rep.
- Claimants can use this time to gather evidence (photos, text messages, legal documents, police reports, medical documents, etc.) and begin prepping for the hearing.



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Frontline Worker Tips

- Documentation
- Legal Aid
- Work Permits
- IFHP



Documentation and Deadlines

- Look at documents given to a claimant at the POE to see the instructions given to them.
- If a claimant cannot meet the deadline given by CBSA to complete the portal, help the claimant write to CBSA.Asylum-Asile.ASFC@CBSA-ASFC.gc.ca to let them know that they are working on it.
- If a claimant cannot meet the 45 day deadline for submitting the BOC, support the claimant in asking the Refugee Protection Division of the IRB for an extension - this can be a concise letter explaining why they are struggling to meet the deadline (for example, that they have been trying to find a lawyer) and proposing an alternative deadline. This letter can be sent via fax or email to the relevant IRB region. For contact information for the IRB by region, see <https://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/contact/Pages/contact3.aspx>
- Encourage claimants to keep copies of all forms and documents submitted - these can be very useful later in the process (for example, when applying for permanent residence).



Legal Support

It is very important that refugee claimants seek legal counsel, as the process is complicated and the stakes are very high. Legal counsel can be found through legal aid offices when applicable or through other legal clinics and community resources. Or if clients have enough financial resources, they can secure representation privately.

Many claimants will need to seek legal aid to cover the costs of being represented by a lawyer. Legal aid is a provincial jurisdiction and it can vary significantly between each province.



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Legal Aid per Province

Legal Aid Alberta: 1-866-845-3425, www.legalaid.ab.ca - Legal aid office

Calgary

Calgary Legal Guidance: (403) 234-9266, www.clg.ab.ca - Free legal counsel for qualifying refugee claimants

Edmonton

Edmonton Community Legal Centre: (780) 702-1725, www.eclc.ca - Free legal counsel for qualifying refugee claimants



Legal Aid per Province

Ontario

- Legal Aid Ontario, 1-800-668-8258, www.legalaid.on.ca - Free legal counsel for qualifying refugee claimants (How to apply: <https://www.legalaid.on.ca/services/how-do-i-apply-for-legal-aid/>)
- Refugee Law Office (part of Legal Aid Ontario)
 - Hamilton: (905) 527-4572
 - Ottawa: (613) 733-0140
 - Toronto: (416) 979-1446

Quebec

- Commission des services juridiques du Québec: (514) 873-3562, www.csj.qc.ca - Legal aid office - Free legal counsel for qualifying refugee claimants



Legal Aid per Province

Manitoba

- Legal Aid Manitoba: 1-800-261-2960, www.legalaid.mb.ca - Free legal counsel for qualifying refugee claimants (How to apply: <https://www.legalaid.mb.ca/how-to-apply/application-centres/>)
- Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc.: (204) 977-1000, www.miic.ca - Paralegal support for refugee claimants



Legal Aid per Province

New Brunswick

- New Brunswick Refugee Clinic: (506) 204-5781, www.nbrc-crnbc.ca - Free legal counsel specific for refugees

Nova Scotia

- Halifax Refugee Clinic: (902) 422-6736, www.halifaxrefugeeclinic.org - Free legal counsel specific for refugees



Work Permits

Who is entitled to a work permit?

- Claimants whose claim has been found eligible (and some claimants waiting for finalization of eligibility - see below)
- Rejected refugee claimants who have submitted an appeal to the Refugee Appeal Division, have applied to the Federal Court for judicial review or have a Pre-Removal Risk Assessment pending.
- Individuals who have:
 - o A positive judicial review
- A positive Refugee Appeal Division decision
- A positive decision on Pre-Removal Risk Assessment (PRRA)
- An unenforceable removal order, including people whose claims are found ineligible but who can apply for PRRA and people whose refugee claim was refused, but are from a country to which Canada does not generally remove people
- Been accepted under Humanitarian & Compassionate grounds or for an in-Canada spousal sponsorship



Steps to Obtain First Work Permit

1. Work permit has been requested
2. Portal application is complete
3. Biometrics were taken
4. Medical exam is complete
5. Eligibility has been determined - this can be done virtually once the above conditions are met



Renewing Work Permits and Continued Right to Work

- Eligible refugee claimants are normally issued a work permit that is valid for two years.
- It is important to apply to renew the work permit before it expires. The work permit will continue to need to be renewed until the person has become a permanent resident.
- As long as the person applies to renew the work permit before the previous work permit expires, the person retains the legal right to work, even if the new work permit has not yet been issued.



IFHP and Medical Care

- Refugee claimants often struggle to get health care services, because service providers do not recognize IFHP, or do not want to provide services to clients covered by IFHP. NGOs can play an essential role in advocating to health care service providers to give services to refugees.
- Note that IFHP will not reimburse fees already paid. NGOs can advise/assist claimants to call a health care provider ahead of time to ensure they accept IFHP coverage before attending an appointment