

# Getting Started as a Refugee Claimant

Your first couple of weeks in Canada may be challenging. Below are 9 steps we recommend you follow in your first weeks. If you need help, please call 2-1-1.

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## WEEK 1:

### Read the Information Kit for Refugee Claimants or call 2-1-1



The Information Kit contains an information booklet, a map of Metro Vancouver, and an overview of the refugee claims process. You can get a kit from CBSA, IRCC offices, airports, land borders, and many settlement agencies. You can also download the kit at [www.bc211.ca/resources](http://www.bc211.ca/resources) in several languages. If you need help finding a copy, please call 2-1-1 and an agent will try to assist you.

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## WEEK 1:

### Get a Housing Assistance Worker and Settlement Support



When you first arrive, you may need to stay in a hotel or hostel. The map in the Information Kit shows several hotels and hostels and their phone numbers. If you need more help finding accommodations, please call 2-1-1.

The Information Kit also tells you how to get a housing assistance worker and general settlement support. Visit these agencies as soon as you arrive in Canada as there is a shortage of housing and housing workers may need several days to find you appropriate accommodations.

If you have limited funds and are unable to pay for your own housing, you may have to move several times before you are placed in more permanent housing.

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## WEEK 1:

### Get a Lawyer



Legal assistance is very important! Legal Services Society may be able to provide a free lawyer. Call 604-601-6076 to find out if you qualify for free legal assistance. When you phone, an intake worker will ask you a series of questions about your financial situation and the reason you are making a refugee claim.

If you are not eligible for a free lawyer or you would like to hire your own paid private lawyer, call 2-1-1 and an agent can assist you.

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## WEEK 1, 2: Fill out your Basis of Claim (BOC) form



If you made your refugee claim at a Port of Entry (airport, land border, seaport) with CBSA, then you must return the Basis of Claim (BOC) form provided to the IRB-RPD (16th floor, 300 West Georgia St, Vancouver) within 15 days.

If you made your claim inside of Canada at the IRCC office (1148 Hornby Street, Vancouver) or intend to make a refugee claim, then there is no deadline to submit your BOC form. Download the form from the website ([www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)) and seek legal assistance.

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## **ALWAYS: Keep all Appointments with CBSA and IRCC**



CBSA and IRCC may ask you to return for appointments or to check in. It is very important that you keep these appointments. If you are unable to keep an appointment, phone them immediately. You can find the phone numbers in the Information Kit. If you need assistance contacting them, please contact your lawyer or settlement worker.

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## **WEEK 2,3: Submit your BOC and start the official Refugee Claim Process**



Once you have submitted your BOC and completed your Eligibility Interview, you will receive a Refugee Protection Claimant Document. With this document, you are eligible for healthcare, financial assistance, a work permit, and other benefits. Please have a lawyer help you complete your BOC. Return your BOC to either the IRB-RPD (for Port of Entry Claims) or IRCC (for Inland Claims). See the Claims Process Overview in the Information Kit for more information

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## **WEEK 2-4: Go on a READY Tour and Prepare for your Refugee Hearing**



READY tours are free and very helpful. The tours let you see inside an actual refugee hearing room, meet the staff at the IRB-RPD, and learn what happens during a refugee hearing.

You will also have a chance to ask questions about the process and preparing for your hearing. To register for a READY tour and to download their free guide, visit [www.refugeeclaim.ca](http://www.refugeeclaim.ca)

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## **WEEK 4-8: Attend your Refugee Hearing**



The IRB-RPD will schedule your refugee hearing for 4-8 weeks after you officially start your refugee claim. The exact date will depend on how you made your claim (at a port of entry or inland at the IRCC office), what country you are from, and how busy they are at the IRB-RPD. You will be informed of your Hearing Date when you get your Refugee Protection Claimant Document.

Your Hearing will determine whether you are accepted as a Refugee or not. The IRB-RPD will make the decision either orally at the end of the hearing, or they will send you a Notice of Decision in the mail.

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## **After the Hearing: Apply for Permanent Residency or Appeal the Decision**

After your Hearing, you will receive either a Positive Decision or a Negative Decision. If you receive a Positive Decision, this means that you have been accepted a Refugee into Canada. You can now apply for Permanent Residency. Ask your Settlement Worker about making this application, or call 2-1-1 and an agent can help you find a settlement agency.

If you receive a Negative Decision, you should speak to a lawyer about the options you have available. Options include either leaving Canada, or submitting an appeal. This should be done with the assistance of a lawyer. If you require assistance in obtaining a lawyer, please call 2-1-1.