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**Understanding Pathways to Permanent Residency in Canada**

This handout provides an overview of the main immigration categories and refugee protection programs in Canada. It is meant to support community members in understanding their options and rights.

1. **Overview of Immigration Categories**

**Temporary Residents**

* **Visitors:** People coming to Canada for a short stay (e.g., tourism, visiting family).
* **Students:** Must have a valid study permit to study at a designated institution.
* **Workers:** Need a valid work permit; some may be tied to a specific employer.
* **Temporary Measures for Crisis:** Special programs for people affected by wars or disasters (e.g., Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan).

**Permanent Residents**

* **Family Sponsorship:** Canadians or permanent residents can sponsor their spouse, partner, dependent children, parents, or grandparents.
* **Economic Immigration:** Skilled workers and professionals who qualify under programs such as Express Entry.
* **Humanitarian & Compassionate (H&C) Applications:** For people already in Canada who face hardship if they return to their home country.
* **Refugees:** People who cannot safely return to their home country due to persecution or risk of harm.

### Refugee Protection Programs

#### A. Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program (Outside Canada)

* For people outside their home country and unable to return because of persecution.
* You cannot apply directly you must be referred by:
  + The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), or
  + A designated referral organization, or
  + A private sponsorship group (such as Sponsorship Agreement Holders).

#### B. In-Canada Asylum Program

* For people already inside Canada who fear persecution or face a risk of torture or cruel treatment in their home country.
* **Application steps:**
  + Submit your claim through the IRCC online portal (within 90 days of starting the application).
  + Receive an Acknowledgement of Claim letter to access services.
  + Complete your Immigration Medical Exam.
  + Attend your eligibility interview.
  + If you're found eligible to make a refugee claim, you will have a right to a hearing before the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB).
* **Documents you may need:**
  + Basis of Claim Form along with other IMM forms
  + ID documents
  + Proof of arrival in Canada
  + Police, medical, or business records
  + Proof of membership in political organizations, unions, or other groups
  + Proof of ill treatment
  + Letters or other supporting documents
* **If your claim is accepted:** You may apply for permanent residence.
* **If refused:** You will receive reasons for the decision and information on how to appeal.

**Note:**

* *Free interpreters are available at your hearing.*
* *You can attend free virtual “Hearing Ready Tours” to help prepare:* [*myrefugeeclaim.ca/en/ready-tours/hearing-ready-tour*](https://myrefugeeclaim.ca/en/ready-tours/hearing-ready-tour)

### Humanitarian & Compassionate (H&C) Applications

* For people applying for permanent residence from inside Canada due to hardship or strong humanitarian reasons.
* No interview, the written application and evidence are very important.
* **Factors considered:**
  + How long you’ve been in Canada
  + Your ties and integration in the community
  + Medical issues or hardship if removed
  + Best interests of any children involved

**Examples of strong supporting evidence:**

* Medical or psychological reports
* Letters from employers, educators, or community leaders
* Proof of volunteering, work, or schooling in Canada
* Reports showing danger or instability in your home country

### Family Sponsorship

**Who can sponsor?**

* Anyone 18+ who is a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or registered Indian under the Canadian Indian Act.

**Who can be sponsored?**

* Spouse or dependent children under 22 (no minimum income required).
* Parents or grandparents (higher income requirement; selected by lottery system).

**Sponsors must prove the relationship is genuine and that they can financially support the person being sponsored.**

### Economic Immigration (Express Entry)

A system used by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to manage skilled worker applications.

**Programs under Express Entry:**

* Canadian Experience Class – 1+ year of skilled Canadian work experience (in the last 3 years).
* Federal Skilled Worker Program – For those with foreign work experience (in the last 10 years).
* Federal Skilled Trades Program – For qualified tradespeople with 2+ years of experience and a valid job offer or trade certificate.

**Applicants are ranked through the Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS). The highest-ranking candidates are invited to apply for permanent residence.**

### Rights and Responsibilities as a Permanent Resident

* You can live, work, and study anywhere in Canada.
* You can sponsor eligible family members.
* You must reside in Canada for at least 730 days (2 years) within every 5-year period to keep your PR status.
* You must renew your PR card every 5 years.

### Recognizing Immigration Scams

**Be cautious of:**

* Anyone asking for payment to “guarantee” a visa or faster processing.
* Fake emails or phone calls claiming to be from IRCC.
* Unlicensed immigration consultants.

**Tips:**

* Check if a representative is authorized at the Law Society or CICC.
* Official IRCC Emails end with @cic.gc.ca, @canada.ca, @international.gc.ca.
* Always use official IRCC websites for applications.
* Never share personal information with unknown sources.

**This document is for general information only and does not replace legal advice.  
For personalized guidance, contact a licensed immigration lawyer or community legal clinic.**

**Muslim Legal Support Centre**

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