

Canadian Resettlement Scheme in partnership with ProtectDefenders.eu Information Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions

About the program

The Government of Canada is working with ProtectDefenders.eu (PD.eu) and its partner organizations to identify and refer human rights defenders for potential resettlement in Canada under its Government-Assisted Refugee Program.

In this program, ProtectDefenders works with the 11 members of its consortium as "Referral Organizations". For more details on these partners please visit [this page](#). A core group of Canadian NGOs and organizations will also be making referrals to this program.

Who is eligible for this program?

This program is for individuals who:

- 1) are a human rights defender who has faced risks related to their human rights activities
- 2) are outside of their home country and cannot return to their home country due to a well-founded fear of persecution
- 3) meet the criteria to qualify as a Convention refugee (see [UNHCR definition](#))
- 4) meet Canada's criteria for resettlement under the Refugee Resettlement Program, including eligibility and admissibility criteria ([link](#))
- 5) are without access to a durable solution in the host country
- 6) are interested in travelling to Canada to establish permanent residence, and such travel is expected to be logistically feasible

I am in my home country. Am I eligible for this program?

Applicants need to be outside of their home country due to a well-founded fear of persecution, and able to contact a UNHCR Field Office in their country of asylum/current residence. Therefore, applicants who are in their home countries are not eligible for this program.

How can I apply for this program?

You can contact ProtectDefenders.eu directly via Canadastream@protectdefenders.eu to be screened for eligibility in this program. If you have already contacted one of the referral organizations, you do not need to contact PD.eu. If you have already contacted PD.eu, there is no need to separately reach out to the Referral Organizations as we are coordinating our efforts.

How should I write my request to ProtectDefenders.eu?

Please download the "[Eligibility Screening Request Form](#)", fill, save and send it to Canadastream@protectdefenders.eu. In your request, please include accurate and factual information regarding the length and nature of your work, the risks you have faced, your current situation, and your legal documentation (refugee registration slip or ID card, residence permit, valid visas or other forms of legal registration with the government and/or UNHCR of the country of current residence). You are also encouraged to attach supporting documents per [this checklist](#).

If you are reaching out to ProtectDefenders.eu, please download and fill out the "[Eligibility Screening Request Form](#)" and send it back to "Canadastream@protectdefenders.eu".

If you cannot send your request in English, you can contact us in your own language, and we will make arrangements for you. Please note that this might take some additional time.

Will I receive an answer?

All applicants will receive a response regarding the result of their request. We will aim to reply to these applicants within six weeks of the date of their first contact with us, although processing times can vary based on case complexity and the volume of incoming case load.

What help will I receive?

If you are eligible for this program, we will refer your case to UNHCR for resettlement consideration in Canada. The UNHCR will conduct the assessment of your case and will contact you directly to complete the required steps.

What happens after my case is referred?

PD.eu will inform you of the date of case referral. You have to wait until you are contacted directly by an official of the UNHCR.

How long does the whole process take?

It could take up to eight weeks to conduct an initial screening of your case. If accepted in the initial screening, your case will need to be verified through the partners of ProtectDefenders.eu. This step could take between one to three months.

Upon successful verification, your case will be referred to a Core Committee for final screening and decision on whether we can refer you or not. This step could take between one to four months.

If you are eligible for this program and we are able to refer your case, after the referral, it can take several months for you to be contacted by the UNHCR. Processing times vary by country.

For successful applicants, it can take up to 1 year from the date of the referral to travel to Canada.

How will I travel to Canada if I am accepted?

For candidates who are approved for resettlement to Canada, transportation loans are available via the Immigration Loans Program. The Government of Canada works closely with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to coordinate travel to Canada. Details on the Immigration Loans Program are available on this [website](#).

Please be advised that we are unable to provide financial support while you apply and wait for your response.

I do not have a passport/travel documents. Can I be considered for this program?

Applicants have to be able to travel to Canada upon approval of their application. ProtectDefenders.eu has a very limited capacity to facilitate applicants' passport/travel documents/exit permits. Therefore, while we will do our utmost to support you throughout the process, we highly encourage you to obtain

a legal travel document on your own. Decisions regarding supporting cases without a valid travel document will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Which members of my family can I include in my application?

You, your spouse, and your children who are younger than 22 years old and unmarried can be included in the application. However, unmarried children above 22 and extended family members (mother, sister, father, brother, niece, nephew) might be considered "de facto dependents" under exceptional circumstances.

Please note that polygamy is a criminal offense in Canada, and Canadian laws do not recognize a polygamous marriage. Therefore, we cannot submit an application for polygamous families.

Does this program provide living costs or financial assistance to applicants?

No living costs are provided under this program.

I have a complaint about this program. Who can I contact?

If you are a participant of this program and wish to share your feedback with us, please write to Complaints@protectdefenders.eu