

IMMIGRATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Please Note:

For more detailed information, please visit Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada's website through (canada.ca)

You can also consult with HALCO through their website (at halco.org) or by phone: 888-705-8889

There are volunteers in a number of community-based organizations across the province who can help with application processes (e.g. YMCA).

1. Can I still file an asylum claim? How do I go about it?

An asylum claim can be made by email for those inside Canada. Refugee Application Forms must be filled, signed and accompanied by 4 passport photographs taken against a white background. All those that initiate claims will be eligible for the Interim Federal Health Program and provincial social assistance.

2. I had a date for my hearing, what happens now?

Documents can still be submitted online or by fax. If your hearing was cancelled, the Immigration and Refugee Board will give claimants and their lawyers a 30-day notice from reopening to reschedule. This means that your hearing will not happen for at least 30 days from the day the Board reopens, with some exceptions:

- Cases where there has already been at least one hearing date so far, and the hearing needs to continue for another day;
- Cases that were suspended during the week of March 17- March 24, 2020;
- Cases where the claimant is detained;
- Urgent or exceptional matters (cases involving unaccompanied minors, or vulnerable people who require priority processing);
- Cases where everyone agrees to proceed sooner.

3. I don't have a date yet, what should I do?

Please wait for the Immigration and Refugee Board to get in touch with you.

4. My work permit has expired, can I renew it?

It is advisable to renew your work permit before it expires. If you apply to extend your work permit before it expires, you will have 'implied status' until you receive a decision on your work permit application, and can work during this time.

You can apply for the renewal of your work permit online by creating an account on the IRCC web site. You can also download and print out the forms online. Most work permit applications must be submitted online with exceptions offered to refugee claimants, some permanent residence applicants, students applying for post-graduate work permits, and those who cannot apply online because of a disability.

5. I am eligible to apply for my permanent residency, can I still apply? How?

Yes, you can still apply either online by creating an account on the IRCC website or through forms that you can download from the IRCC website. If you do not have all of the supporting documentation due to circumstances connected to COVID-19, IRCC will accept your application, as long as you provide an explanation about why you are missing these documents. You can provide the documents when they become available.



6. I am eligible for Canadian Citizenship, how do I apply? Will I do the test in person?

Application forms can be downloaded and filled out. Tests will not be carried out until COVID-19-related restrictions have been lifted. The possibility of doing online testing is currently being explored.

7. I don't have permanent status in Canada. Will I qualify for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)?

Workers are eligible for CERB if:

- they reside in Canada and are at least 15 years old;
- they made a minimum of \$5,000 in 2019;
- they stopped working because of COVID-19 or are eligible for Employment Insurance regular or sickness benefits;
- they did not quit their job voluntarily.

Please visit the Government of Canada website [here](#) for more information on eligibility and including how to apply.

8. My permanent resident application was finalized and I want to enter Canada. What should I do?

Canada is only allowing its citizens and permanent residents entry at this time. Please note that only those whose permanent residency permits were finalized on or before March 18, 2020 will be allowed entry at this time.

9. I need to see a doctor about something other than COVID-19, but I don't have status in Canada. What should I do?

The Ontario Ministry of Health has expanded access to OHIP during the COVID-19 outbreak:

The three-month waiting period for OHIP coverage has been waived. This means that people returning to Ontario from abroad, and others normally subject to the three month waiting period are covered as of March 19, 2020.

All hospitals have been directed to provide “all medically necessary services” to anyone who presents at a hospital, regardless of whether or not they qualify for OHIP or any other provincial/territorial health insurance.

Physicians outside of hospital settings can also see people without insurance and bill OHIP. However, since there are no changes to the legislation governing Ontario's health insurance plan, physicians can choose not to bill OHIP and to charge patients directly.

10. If I get healthcare or if I am tested for COVID-19, will IRCC or Canada Border Services Agency be told where I am?

No

11. My removal from Canada is scheduled to happen soon, what will happen?

It is very likely to be postponed until after the COVID 19-related lockdown.

12. I have an appointment with IRCC, what should I do?

All IRCC offices in Canada are currently closed. If you are not sure if your appointment or meeting has been

cancelled, you can call IRCC's Client Service Centre at 1-888-242-2100 or send IRCC a message through the webform

<https://www.cic.gc.ca/english/contacts/web-form.asp>

13. I have a hearing or filing deadline at the Federal Court of Appeal. What will happen?

Most hearings have been cancelled until June 28, 2020. Emergency matters that will be heard by the Court during this period include cases involving release from immigration detention or imminent removal from Canada. Documents can still be filed and served at the Court, but this is not mandatory for the time being. Some hearings are proceeding online through video conferencing.

14. I am waiting for my detention review hearing, what can I expect?

Detention Hearings are not affected by the current COVID-19-related lockdown. They will continue to be held by phone or video conference as and when due.

15. I can't meet the deadline to file my documents with IRCC, what should I do?

IRCC has given an automatic 90 day extension to complete steps such as providing a passport, completing an immigration medical exam, and providing police certificates. You do not have to request an extension. You should do your best to get these documents as soon as possible to avoid delays in processing.

16. My appeal is due at the Immigration Appeal Division (IAD), what should I do?

All appeal hearings that were scheduled to be held during the period of the current COVID-19-related lockdown have been postponed and will be re-scheduled after the Immigration and Refugee Board re-opens, which for now is tentatively slated for May 30th, 2020.

17. I don't have status in Canada. What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?

Contact Telehealth Ontario at 1800-797-0000 or [here](#). You can also call your doctor for a referral to a testing centre.



The African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario
20 Victoria St 4th floor, Toronto, ON M5C 2N8



Black Coalition For AIDS Prevention
20 Victoria St 4th floor, Toronto, ON M5C 2N8