

# QUESTIONS / ANSWERS

## What does the status of accepted refugee mean?

An accepted refugee is a person who has applied for **asylum** and whose application was **accepted** by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada.

The accepted refugee can then apply for permanent residence right away. There is no time limit to apply for permanent residence.

This document provides general information and does not in any way constitute legal advice or statement of opinion. The Canadian and Quebec immigration systems being particularly complex, they sometimes create quite intricate situations. Therefore, it is necessary to consult specialists to validate the application of various notions to any specific case. The information in this document was verified in May 2017.

For more information and a list of resources, see our guide for community workers: “Immigrants’ and Refugees’ Access to Social Benefits and Programs in Quebec”, available to download for free at: [www.servicesjuridiques.org](http://www.servicesjuridiques.org)

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Also available in this series (in French, English, Arab, Creole, simplified Chinese and Spanish):

- Being an asylum seeker in Quebec
- Being a temporary resident permit holder in Quebec
- Being a non-status person in Quebec
- Being a temporary worker and international student in Quebec
- Being a permanent resident in Quebec
- Being a rejected refugee in Quebec
- The criterion of residence

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# BEING AN ACCEPTED REFUGEE IN QUEBEC



Knowing Your Rights to Social Programs

## JUSTICE

### Can I consult a lawyer for free if I have a legal problem?

**YES**, if a person is eligible for **Legal Aid**, depending on their income and if they live in Quebec, **regardless of immigration status**.

Services available include several legal matters: family, administrative, immigration, youth, criminal, housing, etc.

### Can I go to court if I have a problem with my landlord regarding the dwelling where I live?

**YES**. The *Régie du logement* can intervene if there is a **lease** between the tenant and the landlord. **Immigration status is not verified**.

Tenants who are victims of discrimination may file a complaint with the *Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse*.

## FAMILY

### Can my child go to school?

**YES**. Children of accepted refugees have the right to attend **public school for free** as well as the obligation to go to school in Quebec.

### Am I entitled to child benefits?

**YES**, if an accepted refugee has sole or shared custody of their children, they will receive the **Canada Child Benefit** (federal) and the **Child Assistance Payment** (provincial).

### Am I entitled to government benefits following my child's birth or adoption?

**YES**. An accepted refugee who has worked in the last 12 months with a **work permit** is entitled to benefits under the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP) (parental, maternity, paternity, adoption).

## BENEFITS

### Am I entitled to welfare?

**YES**. Accepted refugees are eligible for welfare, according to certain criteria.

### Am I entitled to financial compensation as a victim of crime?

**YES**. The IVAC (*Indemnisation des victimes d'actes criminels*) program **does not take into account the victim's immigration status** to assess eligibility for benefits.

### Am I entitled to financial compensation as a road accident victim?

**YES**. The SAAQ (*Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec*) program covers all persons considered to be **legal residents** (who are authorized to reside in Canada), which includes accepted refugees, for accidents occurring outside and inside Quebec, regardless of fault.

### Am I entitled to financial support for the elderly?

**POSSIBLY**. To qualify for **Old Age Security** benefits as of age 65, a person must have lived in Canada for at least 10 years since the age of 18.

It is possible to have lived in Canada for 10 years and still have accepted refugee status, for example if the refugee claim was made several years after arriving to Canada.

From the age of 60, it is possible for an accepted refugee to receive benefits from the **Quebec Pension Plan** if they were legally working in Quebec and contributing to the plan.

## HEALTH

### Am I entitled to free medical care and medicine?

**YES**. Accepted refugees are entitled to the **Interim Federal Health Program** (IFHP) for medical and prescription drug coverage until they become permanent residents.

## WORK

### Can I work?

**YES**. An accepted refugee can apply for a **work permit** and work while their permanent residence application is being processed.

### Can I file a complaint against my employer if my working conditions are unfair?

**YES**. The government agency regulating **minimum labour standards** (the CNESST) accepts complaints **regardless of the worker's immigration status**.

### Am I entitled to financial compensation as a result of a work accident that prevents me from working temporarily or permanently?

**YES**. If an accepted refugee works with a **work permit**, the government agency that is responsible for **occupational health and safety** (the CNESST) will study the application for work accident benefits.

### Am I entitled to financial compensation if I lose my job?

**YES**. Accepted refugees who have been working with a valid **work permit** are eligible for Employment Insurance (EI), administered by Service Canada, which replaces up to 55% of gross income (before tax) for a certain period.

If the EI application is accepted, the claimant must be available to work during the benefits period, meaning having a valid **work permit** or having applied for the renewal of the work permit.