

QUESTIONS / ANSWERS

What does permanent resident status mean?

This means that the Government of Canada gives you permission to **live permanently in Canada** with a few conditions.

Can I lose my permanent resident status?

YES. A person may lose their permanent resident status if they have been **outside Canada** for more than two years over a period of five years. Also, a person may lose permanent resident status for committing certain serious crimes.

Can I vote?

NO. The Law does not allow permanent residents to vote in **federal, provincial or municipal elections**. Only Canadian citizens may vote.

Am I entitled to a Canadian passport?

NO. A permanent resident will be entitled to a Canadian passport only once becoming a **Canadian citizen**.

Until then, a permanent resident can still travel freely and return to Canada by showing their **permanent residence card**.

When can I become a Canadian citizen?

A person may become a Canadian citizen after living in Canada as a permanent resident for:

- **at least** six months per year
- **for** four years
- **in the past** six years.

Is it possible to lose Canadian citizenship?

YES. Canadian citizenship may be revoked if it is found that the citizen obtained the status based on false representation or fraud. Individuals facing these claims have the right to defend themselves in court.

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

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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 an accepted refugee in Quebec
- Being a rejected refugee in Quebec
- The criterion of residence

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BEING A PERMANENT RESIDENT 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 with permanent resident status have the right to attend **public school for free** as well as the obligation to go to school in Quebec.

Can I study?

YES. Permanent residents can study in Canada **without a study permit**.

Am I entitled to child benefits?

YES, if a permanent resident 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. Permanent residents who have worked in the last 12 months are entitled to benefits under the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP) (parental, maternity, paternity, adoption).

BENEFITS

Am I entitled to welfare?

YES. Permanent residents are eligible for welfare, depending on their financial situation.

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 permanent residents, for accidents occurring outside and inside Quebec, regardless of fault.

Am I entitled to financial support for the elderly?

YES. Permanent residents are eligible for **Old Age Security** as of age 65, if they've lived in Canada for at least 10 years since age 18.

It is not necessary to have been a legal resident for the entire 10-year period, as long as at the time of the application the applicant is a legal resident.

From the age of 60, permanent residents are also eligible for 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. Permanent residents are entitled to **health and prescription drug insurance** by the *Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec* (RAMQ), the public health care coverage program in Quebec.

WORK

Can I work?

YES. Permanent residents can apply for a **Social Insurance Number** and work **without a work permit**.

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. Permanent residents are eligible for **work accident benefits**, because they can work legally in Canada.

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

YES. Permanent residents are eligible for Employment Insurance (EI), administered by Service Canada, because they are eligible to work legally in Canada.

If the EI application is successful, the claimant must be available to work during the benefits period.

EI replaces up to 55% of gross income (before tax) for a certain period.