

## 1. How many Syrian refugees will be coming to Alberta?

The federal government has extended its deadline to resettle 25,000 refugees to Canada until the end of February 2016. We anticipate that approximately 2,500 to 3,000 will settle in Alberta but that decision is ultimately made by the federal government.

Historically, Alberta has accepted approximately 10 per cent of Canada's new immigrants. Last year, Alberta accepted approximately 145,000 people into our community from throughout Canada and elsewhere and our government is confident we can successfully welcome Syrian refugees. With that, Alberta is working closely with the federal government to ensure the best possible outcomes for all Syrian refugees and Alberta's welcoming communities.

The federal government has determined that the majority, if not all, refugees who come to Canada before the end of this year will be privately sponsored refugees. These children, women and men are being welcomed into the homes of Alberta families, who will help them adjust to life in Canada over the coming year.

## 2. What is Alberta's plan for welcoming Syrian refugees?

We are working with federal, provincial, municipal and community partners on a comprehensive settlement plan and will share details as they become available. The federal government is leading this initiative, and the Alberta government will do its part to ensure refugee resettlement happens in a thoughtful and helpful way that strengthens our communities. To learn more about the federal plan and how you can help refugees, visit [cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/index.asp](http://cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/index.asp).

## 3. We don't have enough housing for people already here. Where will the Syrian refugees live?

The Alberta government is taking a coordinated approach to address the needs of Syrian refugees and the communities in which they are arriving. There is no question housing is an issue. The province is working collaboratively with federal, provincial, municipal and community partners to understand community capacity and address concerns, which include housing. To this end, government is developing a comprehensive Alberta response plan that will have multiple solutions, and it will be finalized once we've received input from all our partners.

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Our government anticipates that most of the families who come here will live in private accommodations and pay market rent. As it is the federal government's responsibility to provide income support to Government-Assisted Refugees for their first year in Canada, we have indicated that support is needed in order for families to pay market rental rates.

**4. Where will the refugees go once they arrive in Alberta?**

Government-Assisted Refugees will be directed to one of the five federally-designated refugee reception centres located in Alberta (Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Red Deer). From there, they will be provided temporary accommodation until a longer-term solution is determined. The Alberta government is also waiting on further information from the federal government as details to their response plan are made available.

Refugees who arrive before the end of the year will be privately sponsored refugees, most of who will live with Alberta families and will not require housing.

**5. Who is paying for the services refugees will need when they arrive to Alberta?**

The federal government is responsible for the Resettlement Assistance Program, which provides support to Government Assisted Refugees. There are five federally funded refugee receiving centres in Alberta, located in Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. The Resettlement Assistance Program includes various programs and services such as settlement assistance upon arrival, immediate short-term housing, counselling and cultural orientation, information and referral to community services, translation and interpretation, language training and job-related services. The federal government provides financial support for Government-Assisted Refugees for up to one year. This financial support includes income support and is intended to cover costs for accommodation, clothing and food.

The Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program is another federal program. Privately Sponsored Refugees are sponsored by family members or Sponsorship Agreement Holders such as churches and other community-based groups. Sponsors are responsible for providing financial and emotional support for the sponsored refugee and his/her family, which includes help for housing, clothing and food, for the duration of the sponsorship. Sponsorship is usually one year but may last up to three years. Privately Sponsored Refugees are also eligible to receive settlement and language supports as provided by immigrant-serving agencies.

To find out the other ways refugees can be privately sponsored, visit [cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/refugees/sponsor/index.asp](http://cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/refugees/sponsor/index.asp).

The Alberta government works in partnership with the federal government to provide funding to immigrant serving agencies in order to meet the settlement and language needs of refugees arriving in our province. Having well-established working relationships with federal and community partners allow us to coordinate our efforts in times like these so as to ensure adequate supports are in place to meet the needs of newcomers and the communities which will be welcoming them.

## **6. Why are we supporting refugees when we are in an economic downturn?**

Our government is committed to supporting Albertans to find and keep good jobs. We also have a humanitarian obligation to help those who are facing terrible circumstances and who don't enjoy the freedom and security we have here in Alberta.

There is no question the current economic situation has affected many Albertans. As we hear about layoffs, we continue to offer our assistance to those seeking employment or training opportunities. This includes working with employers to offer layoff support services to their employees, which include career counselling, resumé preparation, job search assistance, information on retraining and referrals to Service Canada regarding Employment Insurance.

If you have experienced recent job loss, qualified staff members in Alberta Works Centres are available to provide career and employment services that include career planning, work search and job maintenance skills. They can connect you to employers and training options for skills that are in demand. For more information, visit [humanservices.alberta.ca/albertaworks](http://humanservices.alberta.ca/albertaworks).

Our government recently announced the Job Creation Incentive Plan to help businesses create jobs and get Albertans back to work. For more information, visit [work.alberta.ca/jobcreation](http://work.alberta.ca/jobcreation).

## **7. In light of the Paris attacks, how can you guarantee the safety of Canadians and Albertans with the incoming refugees?**

The Alberta government stands by Paris and the people of France as they continue to work through the tragic events that took place on November 13.

The hundreds of thousands of children, women and men who are fleeing Syria are fleeing from acts like these. They too are innocents – and these children, these families, need our help. All people deserve to live in peace

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and security. These things, which we are so fortunate to enjoy in Alberta, are what we wish for all people, no matter where they live, all over the world. There are countries around the world that have suffered from a long history of conflict. Refugees from Syria are victims of violence who are desperately seeking a safe haven for their families.

For decades, Alberta has been one of those havens. We have welcomed people from around the world fleeing violence and oppression, and seeking a new start. Families have come here from Ukraine, from post-war Europe, from Vietnam, from Sudan and from many other parts of the world. When they arrive in Alberta, they find a place where they can begin a new life. In return, these families have contributed to our communities, our culture and our shared prosperity.

We look to the federal government to ensure all security clearance checks are in place to maintain Canadians' and Albertans' safety. Senior federal officials working on the Syrian response plan have stated to provinces and territories that no shortcuts will be taken on security screening.

In the meantime, we will do our part to ensure communities are prepared to welcome refugees. The federal government is leading this initiative, and we will do our part to ensure resettlement happens in a thoughtful and helpful way that strengthens our communities.

**8. Will you consider closing our borders to refugees until our safety can be guaranteed?**

The federal government has extended its commitment to resettle 25,000 refugees in Canada by the end of February 2016. The federal government decides who is selected and determines where they are resettled, so it is not known exactly how many will arrive in Alberta.

With that, our government supports taking between 2,500 and 3,000 Syrian refugees to Alberta as part of the federal government's commitment. Alberta continues to work closely with the federal government to ensure the best possible process for resettling Syrian refugees in communities throughout our province. We look to the federal government to ensure all security clearance checks are in place. In the meantime, we will do our part to ensure communities are prepared to welcome refugees.

All refugees must qualify for entry under Canada's laws and must pass medical and security checks before they can come to Canada. The federal government is leading this initiative, and we will do our part to ensure resettlement happens in a thoughtful and helpful way that strengthens our communities. These refugees — many of them families with young children — are fleeing exactly the kind of terror we were all shocked to observe in Paris recently. Reaching out to help is the right thing to do.

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For more information about the refugee process, visit [cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/index.asp](http://cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/index.asp).

## 9. I would like to help Syrian refugees. What steps do I need to take? Who do I contact?

If you wish to help Syrian refugees, several avenues are available to you.

Donations to the Syrian Refugee Crisis are being accepted by the Canadian Red Cross. Please call 1-800-418-1111 or go to [canadian.redcross.ca/syrian-refugee-crisis/](http://canadian.redcross.ca/syrian-refugee-crisis/) for further information.

Additionally, you may:

- Connect with the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) for information about Alberta's five refugee reception centres. Visit [aaisa.ca](http://aaisa.ca) or email your questions to [contact@aaisa.ca](mailto:contact@aaisa.ca).
- Connect with a settlement agency to volunteer. Visit [work.alberta.ca/settlement-services](http://work.alberta.ca/settlement-services).
- Learn more about privately sponsoring a refugee. Visit [cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/index.asp](http://cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/index.asp) or the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program at [rstp.ca](http://rstp.ca).

The Alberta Refugee Resettlement Grant Initiative is an Alberta government-funded initiative which is currently accepting applications from immigrant serving agencies, sponsorship agreement holders, ethno-cultural groups, municipalities, and other eligible organizations. The aim of this initiative is to address needs and support a coordinated response to the Syrian refugee crisis. For more information, visit [work.alberta.ca/newcomer-services](http://work.alberta.ca/newcomer-services).

## 10. What steps has this government taken to make sure our health services, social services, and education system are able to handle the arrival of 3,000 new people by the end of this year?

In Alberta, intense preparations are underway to welcome Syrian refugees. We are taking a coordinated approach to refugee resettlement in Alberta by working collaboratively with our partners through:

- coordinating and sharing information between municipal, provincial and federal governments;
- identifying and addressing emerging and long term needs of refugees;
- leveraging settlement agencies and community groups in their work with refugees, and
- providing information to the public as it is made available.

For more information on the Alberta government's plan to support Syrian refugees, visit:  
[work.alberta.ca/refugees](http://work.alberta.ca/refugees).