

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA \$112.51 MILLION

Citizenship and Immigration Canada's official development assistance (ODA)²⁴ for 2012–2013 totalled \$112,509,765. This figure amounts to the federal support provided to refugees and vulnerable persons in their first 12 months in Canada.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, there were about 10.5 million refugees in the world at the end of 2012, many of whom had been living in exile for decades. Promoting human rights and protecting refugees has been a cornerstone of Canada's humanitarian tradition since the Second World War. By offering a safe haven to refugees and other persons in need of protection, and through active participation in international forums on refugee protection, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) plays a significant role in upholding Canada's international obligations and humanitarian tradition.

Canada's refugee protection programs are in the first instance about saving lives and offering protection to the displaced and persecuted. In accordance with the *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951)*, Canada provides protection to asylum seekers who have landed in Canada and have been determined to be in need of protection. Flowing from Canada's international and domestic legal obligations, the in-Canada asylum system evaluates the claims of individuals seeking asylum in Canada and grants protected person status when a positive decision is rendered by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. In 2012–2013, Canada granted protection to 8,973 asylum seekers who received positive determinations by the Immigration and Refugee Board.

Canada also protects refugees and vulnerable persons by resettling them to Canada as part of the managed immigration plan. In 2012–2013, Canada resettled 5,235 government-assisted refugees and 4,650 privately sponsored refugees, from refugee populations all over the world. Particular focus was placed on Iraqi refugees in the Middle East, Bhutanese refugees in Nepal, vulnerable religious

minorities, and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. Resettlement spaces were also used for Afghans who supported the Canadian mission in Kandahar, as well as Haitian women and their families who were displaced by the 2010 earthquake and were victims of sexual and gender based violence. These individuals received resettlement services similar to what is offered to government-assisted refugees.

CIC funds a variety of settlement services to help refugees and vulnerable persons integrate into Canadian society, so that they can overcome obstacles and fully participate in the social, cultural, civic and economic life of Canada. Through the Settlement Program, refugees and vulnerable persons are eligible for services including needs assessments, language training, employment counselling, community orientation, support services (including translation and interpretation), and referrals to other health and social services. Refugees who arrive as government-assisted refugees also receive support through the Resettlement Assistance Program, which provides income support for up to 12 months (up to 36 months in exceptional cases), and immediate settlement support including initial reception services at the port of entry, assistance with finding accommodation, financial and community orientation, and referrals to other settlement programs.

Refugees access health services through the federally funded Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) and/or provincially funded health care. Since the June 30, 2012 implementation of the reformed IFHP, refugees receive differential coverage, depending on their immigration status. The reforms ensure that IFHP beneficiaries do not receive taxpayer-funded benefits that are more generous than those provided to Canadians. Refugees, whether successful asylum seekers or resettled refugees who are under private sponsorship, access health services through the federally funded IFHP, until they are eligible for provincially funded health care. Refugees who arrive as government-assisted refugees also receive coverage for supplemental services and products (such as post-arrival health assessments, prescription medications, emergency dental care, vision care, assistive devices and rehabilitation

²⁴ The assistance reported meets the requirements of the *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act* and is consistent with the reporting guidelines for development assistance prepared by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).