

REFUGEE READINESS FUND NEWSLETTER #1

DECEMBER 11, 2015

# Introducing the Newsletter

Welcome to ISSofBC's first Refugee Readiness Fund Newsletter – Syrian Resettlement in BC: Updates and Arrivals.

Funded by the Province of British Columbia, this newsletter will be published weekly from December 2015 through February 2016, and then monthly until March 2017 to provide British Columbians with updated information on the resettlement of Syrian Refugees in British Columbia. The timeframes are intended to align with the timeframe specified by the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for Syrian arrivals.

## BC Refugee Readiness Fund

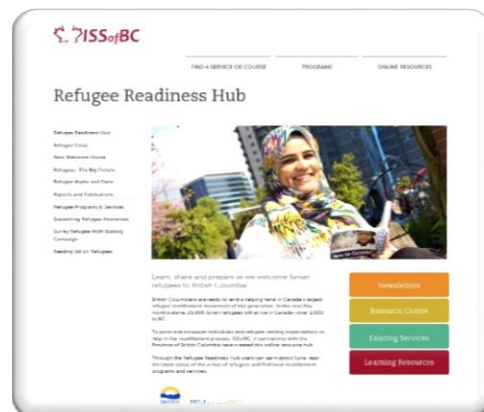
Supported by \$500,000 through the \$1 million Refugee Readiness Fund, the Government of BC has provided ISSofBC funding to:

- Develop an online hub to connect private sponsors, settlement workers, counsellors, and other service providers throughout the province to the information they need to support refugees,

- Track volunteer offers, in-kind donations and housing and employment leads,
- Set up a range of supports for clinicians caring for traumatized refugees, including a new telephone consultation line and a trauma needs assessment tool,
- Provide initial training to Refugee Response Teams.

ISSofBC is the only service provider in BC that provides the full suite of federally-funded Resettlement Assistance Program services to government-assisted refugees.

See [Media Release](#) for more information on the Government of BC's actions to support refugees in BC.



## ISSofBC's Refugee Readiness Hub

ISSofBC's new Refugee Readiness Hub ([www.issbc.org/refugee-readiness-hub](http://www.issbc.org/refugee-readiness-hub)) launched this week and will be updated on an ongoing basis with newsletters, fact sheets, training materials, links to resources and services, and much more.

## Refugeehealth.ca

Primary care and mental health practitioners will have access to updated information on Syrian refugees – including research and tools, as well as materials in Arabic for clients.

CONTEXT



Historical Arrivals: GARs to BC

BC receives approximately **10-12%** of government assisted refugees (GARs) resettled to Canada. All GARs to BC are destined to Vancouver, and settle across Metro Vancouver.

Settlement patterns are largely dictated by the ability to find affordable housing. Over the last 5 years 85% of GARs have settled in Surrey, Coquitlam, Burnaby, Vancouver & New Westminster.

Privately sponsored refugees settle in communities across BC, wherever their sponsors are located.

WHERE ARE WE AT: TARGETS\* VS ARRIVALS

5.4%

British Columbia is anticipating the arrival of 240 Syrian GARs between November 4 and December 31, 2015; to date 13 have arrived in BC.

<1%

1,800 Syrian GARs are anticipated to arrive in BC between November 4, 2015 and February 28, 2016. Arrivals to date account for 0.7% of the overall target for this period provided by IRCC.

OPERATION SYRIAN REFUGEES

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCCC) is providing regular updates (Monday to Friday) on Milestones and key figures associated with Operation Syrian Refugees (see <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/milestones.asp>)

As of December 11, 2015, Canada has welcomed 667 Syrian refugees, including: 97 Government Assisted Refugees, 51 Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugees and 539 Privately Sponsored Refugees.

What Could the Resettlement of 25,000 Syrian GARs Mean for BC?

According to the December 9, 2015 media release from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC): "The Minister noted that many municipalities have expressed an interest in welcoming Syrians as part of the current initiative. Following arrival at ports of entry in Canada, Government-assisted refugees (GARs) will go to one of 36 cities across Canada where there are organizations with services specifically for refugees. There they will receive immediate and specialized support services. In subsequent weeks they will move into permanent accommodation including in surrounding communities, or elsewhere in the province where supports are available"

In British Columbia all GARs are currently destined to Metro Vancouver.

Canada Target\*

IRCC has indicated up to:

- 2,000 Syrian GARs in December 2015
- 15,000 Syrian GARs in January and February 2016
- 8,000 Syrian GARs from March to December 2016

These arrivals are on top of the current targets.

BC Target\*

For planning purposes, IRCC has indicated BC may welcome approximately:

- 240 Syrian GARs before the end of December 2015 (13 of whom have arrived to date)
- 1,560 Syrian GARs in January and February 2016
- 1,200 Syrian GARs from March to December 2016

These arrivals will be on top of existing targets (800-900 per year in BC).



BRITISH COLUMBIAN'S RESPONSE

On November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015 ISSofBC held a Call to Action to encourage people across the province to aid in the resettlement of Syrian refugees through offers of housing, employment and volunteering. We are humbled by the response. To date,



**1,041** housing leads, plus over **90** units offered by developers, property managers and owners for temporary and permanent accommodation

**5,767** people have come forward to offer their time and talent.



**164** job leads have been submitted to our survey

50 employers and 100 refugees participated in a Dec 11 Hiring Fair.

SYRIAN GAR ARRIVALS: NOV 4 – DEC 11



**13** Syrian GAR individuals

**8**



Syrian GAR households

The majority of arrivals to date are adults age 19-64 (10 individuals or 77%). Distributions in other age categories are <5.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Additional information, resources and training materials are available on our website (<http://www.issbc.org/prim-corp-nav/our-work-with-refugees>), as well as the Refugee Resettlement Hub ([www.issbc.org/refugee-readiness-hub](http://www.issbc.org/refugee-readiness-hub)). For further information please contact:

CHRIS FRIESEN,  
DIRECTOR – SETTLEMENT SERVICES  
[chris.friesen@issbc.org](mailto:chris.friesen@issbc.org)

\* Please note: targets are estimates only and should not be considered factual