

RSTP Bulletin

The latest news and updates on Canada's Refugee Sponsorship and Resettlement Programs

The Canada Emergency Response Benefit

The [Canada Emergency Response Benefit \(CERB\)](#), which launched on April 06, 2020, is a Federal temporary income support program for individuals who stopped working for reasons related to COVID-19.

The CERB is available to individuals:

- Residing in Canada, who are at least 15 years old;
- Who have stopped working because of reasons related to COVID-19 or are eligible for Employment Insurance (EI) benefits or have exhausted their EI regular benefits between December 29, 2019 and October 3, 2020;
- Who had employment and/or self-employment income of at least \$5,000 in 2019 or in the 12 months prior to the date of their application; and,
- Who have not quit their job voluntarily.

Further detailed information on the eligibility requirements for the CERB program, and information on how to apply, can be found on the CERB website [here](#).

Question

Can newcomers sponsored under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees and the Blended Visa Office Referred Programs apply for the CERB even if they are within their sponsorship period?

Answer

Newcomers sponsored for resettlement to Canada under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program or the Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR) program that are within their sponsorship period may apply for the CERB and receive income support through the program if they meet all of the eligibility criteria outlined at the link above (newcomers should not apply if they are not eligible as ineligible individuals who receive income support through the program may have to repay the funds in the future).

The income support a sponsored newcomer receives through the CERB program is considered to be earned income by IRCC, in the same way financial support received via the EI program is, and is not considered to be social assistance.

There will be no consequences for a sponsoring group (i.e. a sponsorship default and/or a request for repayment) if the newcomers they have sponsored who are still within their sponsorship period apply for the CERB program and receive income support through the program.

Question

Can sponsors make deductions to the monthly income support they provide if a sponsored newcomer receives income support through the CERB program?

Answer

As any income support a sponsored newcomer receives through the CERB program is considered to be earned income, sponsors may make dollar for dollar reductions from the monthly income support they provide for the period the newcomer receives support through the program if the CERB income support is higher than 50% of the monthly income support being provided by the sponsors.

If the amount the newcomer receives through the CERB program is 150% of the monthly income support being provided by sponsors, the newcomer may no longer require financial support from their sponsors. However, sponsors must still provide settlement support until the end of the sponsorship period and resume financial support when the newcomer stops receiving income support through the CERB program or the amount received drops below the 150% threshold.

For example, if a family of three (a single non-senior adult and two children aged 12 and 8) are living in [Edmonton, AB](#) and are receiving \$1,741 in monthly income support from their sponsors, but receive \$2,000 through the CERB program, the sponsors can reduce the monthly income support they provide by \$1,129.50 and only provide \$611.50 in monthly support for the period the newcomer receives CERB support as the amount received from the CERB program exceeds the 50% threshold (\$870.50) from which dollar for dollar reductions may begin.

Question

Is the income support received from the CERB program taxable income?

Answer

Whereas the financial support provided by sponsors to newcomers during the sponsorship period is generally considered to be a "gift" by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and is not taxable income, the income support eligible newcomers receive through the CERB program is taxable and will need to be declared when recipients file their 2020 tax return next year.

For more information on the CERB, please [click here](#).

UPCOMING RSTP WEBINARS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Updates from IRCC on Travel and Arrivals

All scheduled flights to Canada for sponsored refugees have been cancelled until further notice. All refugees and sponsors should have been informed of this if flights had been previously scheduled. If there are flights for which sponsors and the refugees have not received cancellation information, please contact ROC-O via [email](#). Please also inform sponsored refugees that had flights in place that all flights have been cancelled until further notice and it is not known at this time when travel to Canada will resume.

IRCC has also recommended that sponsors/sponsored refugees do not self-book their travel, even if they are able to find an open travel route to Canada, as the IOM cannot provide the refugees with the documentation they need to travel or any assistance while its operations are suspended and IRCC also does not have the capacity to do so.

IRCC is beginning to plan for when travel to Canada might resume. Once travel to Canada resumes, IRCC will contact sponsors to ensure they are able to welcome the sponsored newcomers, provide support in accordance with the program requirements and can facilitate or assist the newcomers with [self-quarantining on arrival](#). The sponsored refugees will also be contacted to confirm their willingness to travel amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sponsors should not contact IRCC to confirm their ability to welcome the newcomers they have applied to sponsor; IRCC will contact sponsors and the sponsored refugees once travel to Canada is possible.

Contacting IRCC's Resettlement Services Assurance Team (RSAT)

Sponsors who have any specific questions or concerns about their ability to provide financial and/or settlement support to newcomers sponsored under the PSR and BVOR programs as a result of COVID-19 should contact IRCC's Resettlement Services Assurance Team (RSAT) directly via email at: IRCC.PSRCaseReview-RevuedecasPSR.IRCC@cic.gc.ca

Upcoming RSTP Webinars

Preparing for Arrival and Providing Post-Arrival Support: Handling Unrealistic Expectations and Practicing Ethical Consideration

Date: Monday, April 27, 2020

Time: 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm EDT

Registration: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/8276808379994151437>

Preparing and Transitioning to Month 13

Date: Wednesday, April 29, 2020

Time: 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm EDT

Registration: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/2075707934872384525>

Have Questions? Contact Your Nearest RSTP Trainer

To find your nearest RSTP Trainer, and the contact details of other RSTP staff, please [click here](#).

Subscribe to RSTP's Email List

Subscribe to the RSTP email list by clicking [here](#) to receive the latest updates on how COVID-19 is affecting refugee sponsorship/resettlement to Canada, as well as to get the details of all of our upcoming online trainings, workshops and webinars as soon as they are posted.

How to Submit an PSR Application to ROC-O Via Email

If you are submitting a new PSR sponsorship application to ROC-O, you are strongly advised to do so [via email](#) so the [application can be processed](#).

Please ensure that all new PSR applications are complete, and all the required forms and supporting documents are included with the application package, as currently there are no exemptions from the application requirements for new PSR applications being submitted to ROC-O.

A video explaining how to prepare and submit an refugee sponsorship application to ROC-O via email can be found [here](#).



Refugee
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