

CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES



A BRIEF GUIDE TO THE CCR CONSULTATION

CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES

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WELCOME TO THE CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES!

The Canadian Council for Refugees wishes a warm welcome to all participants at the consultation and particularly to those attending a CCR consultation for the first time.

CCR consultations are organized jointly by the CCR Executive, the staff and the local organizing committee, with important and active contributions by volunteers, both from the CCR membership and the local community where the consultation takes place.

This booklet is intended to give some basic orientation to the CCR structures and procedures.

We know that the organization can seem confusing and perhaps intimidating at first, but there are many people who are more than willing to answer any questions you may have. We encourage you to jump right in and participate!

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Canadian Council for Refugees is a non-profit umbrella organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees in Canada and around the world and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada. The membership is made up of organizations involved in the settlement, sponsorship and protection of refugees and immigrants. The Council serves the networking, information-exchange and advocacy needs of its membership.

The mandate of the Canadian Council for Refugees is rooted in the belief that:

- * Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution; (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 14.1)
- * Refugees, refugee claimants, displaced persons and immigrants have the right to a dignified life and the rights and protections laid out in national and international agreements and conventions concerning human rights;
- * Canada and Canadians have responsibilities for the protection and resettlement of refugees from around the world;
- * Settlement services to refugees and immigrants are fundamental to participation in Canadian life;
- * National and international refugee and immigration policies must accord special consideration to the experience of refugee and immigrant women and children and to the effect of racism.

The Canadian Council for Refugees is guided by the following organizational principles:

- * The membership of the Canadian Council for Refugees reflects the diversity of those concerned with refugee and settlement issues and includes refugees and other interested people in all regions of Canada;
- * The work of the Council is democratic and collaborative;
- * Our work is national and international in scope.

The Canadian Council for Refugees fulfils its mission by:

- * Providing opportunities for networking and professional development through conferences, working groups, publications and meetings;
- * Working in cooperation with other networks to strengthen the defence of refugee rights;
- * Advancing policy analysis and information-exchange on refugee and related issues;
- * Advocating for the rights of refugees and immigrants through media relations, government relations, research and public education.

Adopted by the membership November 13, 1993.

BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE CCR

LEADERSHIP

The CCR is governed by an Executive Committee elected by the CCR membership. Executive members serve terms of two years. Elections are held at each Annual General Meeting (in November or December).

ISSUES AND POLICY

The CCR addresses issues through its working groups and core groups (for details, see page 4). The CCR's policy base is established through resolutions adopted at each General Meeting (one is held at each conference). Past resolutions already cover a vast range of issues: you can read about them in the Resolutions Book (available online or at the Publications table). You can read below (page 8) for information on how to draft a resolution for an issue not already covered.

JOINING THE CCR

Non-governmental organizations are warmly encouraged to consider joining the CCR. Full members must be Canadian organizations, but we also have a category of non-Canadian membership and another for individuals. Full details are in the membership packages, available from the registration desk or from ccrweb.ca – or ask a member of the Executive.

VISIT THE CCR WEB SITE

The CCR has a web site: ccrweb.ca where you can find information about meetings, documents, press releases, campaigns, public education resources, etc.

KEEPING IN TOUCH BY EMAIL

The CCR has a listserv (email discussion group), called [ccrlist](mailto:ccrlist@ccrweb.ca), which offers NGO participants an opportunity to receive and exchange information. To join, send a note to ccrlist@ccrweb.ca. The CCR also publishes a monthly Chronicle, available to all. To receive it electronically, go to the CCR website at ccrweb.ca/en/chronicle and subscribe.

MEETING CYCLE

The CCR meets 4 times a year. Two of these meetings are consultations, in late November/early December and in late May/early June. The consultations move around to different cities. A General Meeting is always held at these consultations. The other two meetings are working group meetings and are held in Toronto in February, and in Montreal in early September.

ANTI-OPPRESSION POLICY

The CCR adopted an Anti-Oppression Policy in May 2009, in which it made a commitment to anti-oppression in all the areas of our work focused externally on changing our society and internally on eliminating oppression within the CCR.

ANTI-RACISM POLICY

The CCR is committed to combatting racism in all its activities. It has adopted an Anti-Racism Policy.

ANTI-HOMOPHOBIA POLICY

The CCR adopted an anti-homophobia, anti-heterosexism and anti-transphobia policy in 2005.

REFUGEE PARTICIPATION POLICY

The CCR is committed to promoting the full participation of refugees in the CCR and has adopted a policy to this effect.

AMINA MALKO REFUGEE PARTICIPATION FUND

In recognition of the financial barriers which limit refugee participation, the CCR has a fund to cover part of expenses for a certain number of refugees to attend CCR meetings. Applications are invited towards the end of each calendar year to attend CCR meetings in the following year.

REFUGEE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The CCR also has a program to encourage and support refugees in seeking leadership positions within the CCR. Applications are invited towards the end of each calendar year to participate in the program in the following year.

WORKING GROUPS

The working groups are the forum in which CCR members exchange information, network and develop strategies and policy positions in areas of concern. They are responsible for preparing resolutions and planning workshops at the consultations, and advising the Executive on policy.

All CCR members are encouraged to attend the meetings of the working groups of interest to them. Meetings are open to other non-governmental representatives. Members of inter-governmental organizations are invited to attend as observers. Meetings are closed to media and government representatives.

WORKING GROUP ON IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT

➤ looks at all issues relating to refugee and immigrant settlement in Canada (e.g. language training, access to employment, counselling).

WORKING GROUP ON INLAND PROTECTION

➤ concerned for the protection of refugee claimants in Canada or seeking to come to Canada.

WORKING GROUP ON OVERSEAS PROTECTION AND SPONSORSHIP

➤ looks at issues relating to the selection of refugees overseas (refugees sponsored by either the government or private groups) and the programs for them here in Canada. Also interested in protection issues for refugees around the world.

THE CCR ALSO HAS THE FOLLOWING:

LEGAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

➤ guides and oversees the CCR's increasingly active litigation agenda, including interventions in significant cases affecting refugees and immigrants, and the legal challenge of the safe third country provision.

YOUTH NETWORK

➤ engages in online discussions and teleconferences, the organization of youth-led workshops and strategy sessions and the development of youth-driven projects — all with the vision and commitment to promote youth inclusion in the Canadian Council for Refugees and to address challenges faced by refugee and immigrant youth.

GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSION

Principles

- * The CCR recognizes that there are many barriers to full participation in CCR meetings, including linguistic and cultural barriers and unfamiliarity with CCR ways of working.
- * The CCR values inclusiveness and full participation of all and commits itself to measures that promote this.

Guidelines for chairs

- * Offer a particular welcome to new participants and encourage them to contribute to the discussion, emphasizing that their input is valued.
- * Ensure that all participants have an opportunity to express themselves in the course of the meeting (e.g. by making a point of asking for interventions from people who have not already spoken).
- * Offer brief explanations of acronyms, programs, CCR procedures, and anything else that may be obscure to newcomers.
- * Make use of small group discussions and other techniques that make participation easier.
- * When groups of volunteers are being formed (e.g. to work on a project or draft a resolution) encourage a mix of “new” and “old” members.

Guidelines for new members

- * Express your point of view. Your input is valued.
- * Ask for an explanation of anything that is not clear to you.
- * Propose agenda items of concern to you.
- * Volunteer for any activities that interest you. You do not need to be an “expert” or an old hand to be able to contribute.

Guidelines for “old members”

- * Offer to sit next to newcomers and explain things to them as necessary.
- * Avoid speaking in code (using acronyms, making “in” references).
- * If you have been participating actively, keep it up, but bear in mind that the longer you have been around the CCR, the less time you should need in meetings to get your points across.
- * If your participation has been more passive, consider getting more involved (give your opinions on issues, volunteer for activities).

RESOLUTIONS CHECKLIST

All CCR members are responsible for ensuring that the CCR adopts strong and credible policies, through their participation in the debates on resolutions at the Working Group and General Meetings.

The following are questions you should ask to evaluate draft resolutions.

1. Does it state a policy position?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Focus on the policy, not on action to communicate it such as writing a letter. ➤ If you want an action (e.g. research, setting up a meeting), discuss it in the working group (a resolution is not needed).
2. Is it a new policy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Once a policy is adopted by resolution, the CCR can act – don't repeat the resolution. ➤ If we are changing our position from a previous resolution, say so.
3. Is the policy stated in a way that will be relevant in more than this specific situation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We want to establish a policy that we can apply to similar situations in other places or at other times. ➤ The “whereas” can refer to a specific situation, but the “be it resolved” should focus on the more general principles.
4. Are facts correct?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If we are not sure of facts, consider doing research or holding a workshop before moving a resolution.
5. Is it clear?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Everyone should have the same understanding of the policy position we are adopting. ➤ Simpler is often clearer.
6. Is the wording constructive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The CCR's resolutions are read by many people. Make sure the wording enhances CCR credibility.
7. Is it consistent with CCR goals (mission)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If you have to argue for why it is relevant to the CCR, maybe it is not so relevant.
8. Is it in the right Working Group? Is it relevant to more than one Working Group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ For resolutions relevant to more than one Working Group, decide on the lead WG, but consult the other WG in case they have concerns or suggestions for amendments.

Of course there is one **fundamental question** remaining:

- Is this the right policy position?

PROCESS FOR DEBATING RESOLUTIONS

Presenting resolutions at the General Meeting

1. The mover or seconder must present the resolution, by outlining the main point (1-2 minutes only). They should not read the resolution.
2. Others can then ask questions or raise concerns about the resolution.
3. The resolutions have been reviewed by the Resolutions Committee, which may raise some points about resolutions. These are indicated by an asterisk.
4. Once a resolution is presented, it belongs to the meeting as a whole, and cannot be withdrawn or amended without the approval of the majority of the members at the meeting.

Amendments

5. If anyone has concerns about an aspect of a resolution, they are encouraged to propose specific wording changes to address the concern. This new wording becomes a proposed amendment. A seconder is required before any amendment can be considered.
6. Any amendment, even if considered “friendly”, must be voted on, in order to change the text of the resolution. That vote is just on whether or not to accept the amendment, not on the resolution as a whole.

Voting on the resolution

8. After any amendments have been discussed and debated, the resolution itself can be voted on. Voting is by voting card (issued one per member organization).
9. If anyone feels that the debate has been going on long enough, they can “call the question” which means that they want the matter put to a vote, without further discussion. If someone proposes ending the debate, and there is a seconder, there will be any immediate vote on whether to end the debate. If at least two-thirds of the members vote to end the debate, the vote on the resolution will take place immediately. Otherwise, debate will continue.

ACRONYMS AND OTHER ODDITIES

117(9)(d)	Paragraph in the <i>Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations</i> establishing the ‘excluded family member’ rule.
AAISA (ay-sa)	Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies
AMSSA	Association of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC
AO	Anti-oppression
ARAISA	Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies
ATC	Annual Tripartite Consultation on Resettlement (held in Geneva in June/July)
AWR	Women at risk
Bill C-11	Bill tabled March 30, 2010 proposing changes to the refugee determination system.
BIOC/BIC	Best interests of the child
CAIPS (capes)	Computer Assisted Immigration Processing System (system used by Canadian visa officers)
CAT	Convention Against Torture (also Committee Against Torture)
CBSA	Canada Border Service Agency (created December 2003)
CCPP	Consultative Committee on Practices and Procedures (of the IRB)
CCR	Canadian Council for Refugees
CEC	Canadian Experience Class
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CISSA-ACSEI (see-sa ak-say)	Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance/Alliance canadienne du secteur de l’établissement des immigrants
CPC	Case Processing Centre
CR	Convention refugee
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSIC	Canadian Society of Immigration Consultants
CSIS	Canadian Security Intelligence Service
CSQ	Certificat de sélection du Québec (Quebec Selection Certificate)
DFAIT (d-fate)	Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
DHS	Department of Homeland Security (in US)
DMP	Designated Medical Practitioner
EAL	English as an Additional Language

ESL/FSL	English/French as a second language
EXCOM	Executive Committee (of the UNHCR)
GAR	Government-assisted refugee
GBA	Gender-based analysis
H & C	Humanitarian and compassionate consideration
HRSDC	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
ICAMS	Immigration-Contribution Accountability Measurement System
ICLMG	International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group
ICVA (ik-va)	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDP	Internally displaced person
IFA	Internal Flight Alternative
IFH	Interim Federal Health Program
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service (US - obsolete)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IP	Inland Protection (CCR Working Group)
IRB	Immigration and Refugee Board
IRPA	Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (came into force 28 June 2002)
I&S	Immigration and Settlement (CCR Working Group)
ISAP	Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (CIC) – obsolete
JAS	Joint Assistance Sponsorship
LGBT(Q)	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual/transgender, queer
LINC	Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (CIC) – obsolete
MIO	Migration Integrity Officer
MIRSSA	Manitoba Immigrant and Refugee Settlement Sector Association
Mississauga	Case Processing Centre for family sponsorship applications
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NHQ	National Headquarters
OCASI	Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
OHIP	Ontario Health Insurance Plan
OPS	Overseas Protection and Sponsorship (CCR Working Group)
PDRCC(C)	Post-Determination Refugee Claimant in Canada Class (obsolete)
PIF	Personal Information Form - completed by refugee claimants

POE	Port of Entry
PRRA	Pre-removal Risk Assessment
PRS	Protracted Refugee Situations
PSR(P)	Private sponsorship of Refugees (Program)
RAD	Refugee Appeal Division (part of IRPA but not implemented)
RAP	Resettlement Assistance Program (for government-assisted refugees)
ROLF	Right of Landing Fee (commonly known as Head Tax)
RPD	Refugee Protection Division (of the IRB, formerly CRDD)
RPO	Refugee Protection Officer (employee of IRB)
RRD	Refugee Rights Day (April 4th), commemorating the 1985 Singh decision
RSTP	Refugee Sponsorship Training Program
SAH	Sponsorship Agreement Holder
SAISIA	Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies
SIJPPC	Settlement and Integration Joint Policy and Program Council
SIRC	Security Intelligence Review Committee
SPO	Service Provider Organization
STCA	Safe Third Country Agreement (between Canada and the US)
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TCRI	Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes
TFW(P)	Temporary Foreign Workers (Program)
TRP	Temporary Resident Permit
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UPP	Urgent Protection Program
Vegreville	Location (in Alberta) of Case Processing Centre for permanent residence, work permit and other applications
VOR	Visa office referred (for private sponsorship)
VSI	Voluntary Sector Initiative
WRD	World Refugee Day (June 20th)
YN	Youth Network (CCR)