



Photo courtesy of cbc.ca

Syrian Resettlement in BC

REFUGEE READINESS FUND NEWSLETTER #4

JANUARY 17, 2016

GAR. BVOR. PSR. - Understanding what these are and how many have arrived in BC

Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has created a multitude of sites to provide information on Operation Syrian Refugee, including:

- Milestones and Key Figures (<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/index.asp>)
- Map of destination communities and Service Provider Organizations (<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/map.asp>)

Canada's original humanitarian goal of bringing 25,000 GARs to Canada has been extended to include at least 10,000 PSRs. And then there are references to BVORs. But what are these? And where are they settling?

Canada's humanitarian program welcomes refugees through both overseas and inland protection. Those arriving through overseas programs have their claims for Convention refugee status assessed abroad and arrive in Canada with the right to permanent residence. Those seeking inland protection arrive in Canada of their own accord and have their claim for protection assessed in Canada. All of the refugees coming to Canada under Operation Syrian Refugee are doing so through overseas programs, including:

- Government Assisted Refugees (GAR);

- Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR); and
- Blended Visa Office Referred Refugees (BVOR).

Syrian refugees coming to Canada under Operation Syrian Refugee are

Government Assisted Refugees (GAR)

Convention refugees whose initial settlement (for up to one year) is entirely supported by the Government of Canada or by the province of Quebec. They are referred to Canada for resettlement by a referral organization like the UNHCR.

Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR)

Refugees who meet either the Convention refugee or the Country of Asylum definitions. They are referred for resettlement by a private sponsor in Canada who agrees to provide financial and other support for the refugee for one year. Over 90% are family reunification cases.

Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR)

Convention refugees referred by the UNHCR to a Canadian Visa Officer who are matched with a private sponsor in Canada. Unlike PSRs, the sponsoring group does not have any ability to identify the individual(s) they would like to sponsor (eg family reunification). The Federal Government provides up to six months of income support

through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), while private sponsors provide another six months of financial support and up to a year of social and emotional support.

GARs/BVORs/PSRs in BC (Nov 4 – Jan 14)

According to IRCC, over 916 Syrian refugees have been resettled to BC, including over 813 GARs/BVORs and over 103 PSRs. (Note: IRCC suppresses numbers for locations receiving less than 5 individuals. Seven communities receiving BVORs/PSRs have had numbers suppressed, as such the number of GARs/BVORs may be as high as 825 and PSRs as high as 119).

Unlike GARs, all of whom are currently destined to Vancouver, BVORs and PSRs are resettled across BC. Since November 4, 2015 and as of January 15, 2016, 19 communities across BC have welcomed Syrian Refugees.

Although the vast majority of Syrian refugees have settled in Metro Vancouver (92%), approximately 3.5% have settled on Vancouver Island (Duncan, Nanaimo and Victoria), 0.3% in Southeast BC (Fernie), 3.6% in the Thompson-Okanagan (Kamloops, Kelowna, Oliver, Osoyoos and Salmon Arm), and 0.5% in Northern BC (Prince George) (see visual on p2).

CONTEXT



Historical Arrivals: GARs to BC

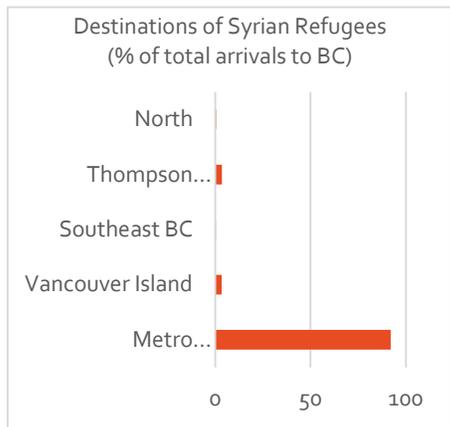
BC receives approximately **10-12%** of government assisted refugees (GARs) resettled to Canada. All GARs to BC are destined to Vancouver, and settle across Metro Vancouver.

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 Westminister.

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

DESTINATIONS OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN BC (%)

Since November 4, 2015 and as of Jan 14, 2016 – 19 BC communities have welcomed Syrian refugees.



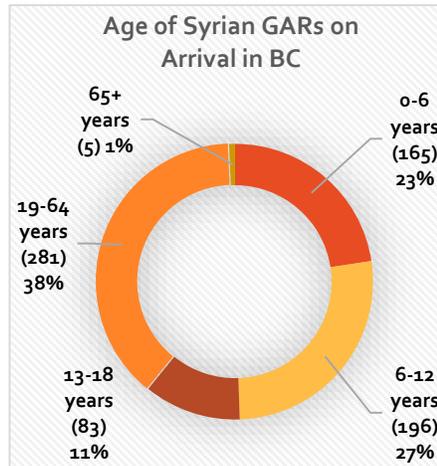
OPERATION SYRIAN REFUGEES

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 January 14, 2015, Canada has welcomed 10,790 Syrian refugees, including: 5,504 Government Assisted Refugees, 713 Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugees and 4,573 Privately Sponsored Refugees.

Updates on Syrian GAR Arrivals

Since November 4, 2015 and as of January 15, 2016, ISSofBC has welcomed 730 Syrian GAR individuals / 159 family units.



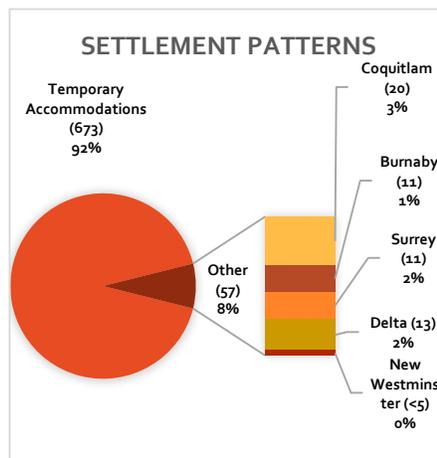
Sixty percent (61%) of Syrian GAR arrivals are age 18 and under. Thirty-seven percent (38%) of Syrian GAR arrivals are of school age (6 – 18 years). Approximately one in four arrivals are children under age 6.

Syrian GAR Settlement Patterns

As of January 15, 2016,

- 673 Syrian GARs individuals /145 units remain in temporary accommodations
- 57 Syrian GAR individuals/ 13 units have moved into permanent housing

Syrian GARs have permanently settled in Coquitlam, Burnaby, Surrey, Delta and New Westminister.



ISSofBC's current emphasis is on identifying permanent housing across Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. If you are aware of available housing – particularly for larger families – please let us know: [Offers of Accommodation](#).

BRITISH COLUMBIAN'S RESPONSE

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



1,184 housing leads, plus over **110** 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.



229 job leads have been submitted to our survey

SYRIAN GAR ARRIVALS: NOV 4 – JAN 15



730 Syrian GAR individuals

Credited by: Migration West Coast Project

159 Syrian GAR units



Credited by: IRCCC

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). For further information please contact:

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TOLL-FREE PHONE: 1-844-447-9742