Guide for Employers on Arrival and Settlement
Congratulations on Your New Hire!

Talent Beyond Boundaries is thrilled to partner with you towards the employment and immigration of a talented refugee and their family.

Did you know?

• There are over 26 million refugees worldwide according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).
• Less than 1% of refugees are selected each year for humanitarian resettlement to a safe country.
• International job opportunities and skilled immigration ("labour mobility") for refugees has the potential to become part of the global response to the refugee crisis – but it is not yet being fully utilized because of unintended barriers facing refugee applicants. Pioneering employers have helped test and improve this new mobility option, and it is now a real solution for companies and the talented people they hire from displacement circumstances.
• If more refugees moved as skilled workers on economic visas, humanitarian resettlement would continue to be a vital lifeline for the world’s most vulnerable refugees. In total, more refugees would be able to move to a safe country and rebuild their lives.
• Labour mobility has the potential to help talented refugees advance their careers, to help employers find in-demand talent, and to help communities attract and retain newcomers and their families.

Talent Beyond Boundaries is working to enable refugees to move on the basis of their skills, just like other skilled immigrants, to contribute to companies and communities in need of talent.

Employers are critical to continue opening labour mobility as a new solution for refugees worldwide. Thank you for your partnership.
What’s in this Guide?

Employers who hire a skilled refugee from outside Canada are testing in real time what works during the arrival and settlement of their new employees. This is a developing area of recruitment and community engagement for employers in Canada and globally.

This guide shares some early good practice by employers working with Talent Beyond Boundaries in Australia and Canada. It identifies some of the challenges and areas where support may be needed during arrival and settlement. It provides tips and ideas pioneered by other employers. It will be a living document because no one employer or community has the same experience as another.
A New Kind of Immigration

Refugees like your new employee who arrive on economic immigration pathways to Canada such as the provincial nomination programs, federal Express Entry programs, and the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program, arrive as immigrants with permanent residence; although some may arrive first on a work permit with a pathway to permanent residence. They receive the same government-funded settlement services that are available to any other economic immigrant. They do not receive the same services as refugees who arrive under the resettlement program, which includes privately sponsored refugees and government-assisted refugees.

This means that ‘skilled refugees’ are treated like other immigrants, but they may share some of the same needs as other refugees. For example, many refugees have little to no savings, which makes covering living costs prior to receiving a first paycheque difficult. Some of the gaps between immigrant- and refugee-services are very important to fill. Employers can play a critical role in filling these gaps.

Here is a snapshot of some of these gaps:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Immigrant (Your new employee)</th>
<th>Resettled Refugee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No income support</td>
<td>Receives income support for 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This gap is addressed by arranged employment</td>
<td>Receives air transportation (through a government loan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No air transportation</td>
<td>Receives airport pick-up and transit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No airport pick-up and transit</td>
<td>Receives transitional housing (as well as permanent housing for 1 year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No transitional housing</td>
<td>Receives healthcare insurance upon arrival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No healthcare insurance until three months after arrival (depending on province)</td>
<td>Receives guided orientation to a new city, including setting up a bank account, getting a Social Insurance Number (SIN) card, finding grocery stores, finding furniture, registering children in school, etc. (received by privately sponsored refugees only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No guided orientation</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Employers are not alone! Here are some of the settlement services that all refugees arriving as economic immigrants do receive. These services are available to all immigrants to Canada, for everyone in the family, although they vary in availability between urban and rural areas:

All Immigrants

- Settlement counseling through a government-funded settlement agency
- Language courses that are free, called Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)
- Provincial/territorial healthcare insurance plans, usually after several months resident in Canada
Checklist of Key Support

This list provides measures taken by employers which they have found key for smooth integration, and which have helped fill some of the gaps mentioned in the previous section. They are described in more detail in the next section along with other good practices.

Before Arrival
- Get to know each other
- Be a resource
- Establish a company contact person
- Arrange airport pick-up and transportation
- Arrange transitional housing
- Agree on a start date approximately one to two weeks after arrival
- Consider a pay advance
- Extend your health plan
- Purchase a SIM card and cell phone
- Purchase a laptop
- Stock the fridge
- Host an information session for staff

After Arrival
- Provide orientation
- Accompany to key appointments
- Ask if they have enough cash to cover basic necessities
- Schedule a drop-in
- Host a welcome meal
- Support the housing search

At Work
- Establish flexible working hours in weeks one and two
- Assign a buddy
- Schedule regular check-ins with a supervisor
- Be informed about the cultural needs of your new employee

 Indicates TBB’s strongest recommendations
Good Practices Before Arrival

These are some ideas for you to consider as you prepare for the arrival of your new employee and their family.

Get to know each other
Set up a line of communication before arrival. This can be by email, WhatsApp, Slack, or other platform.

Be a resource
State your willingness to help out with questions about working and living in Canada. Many questions will arise that could range from good places to search for housing, to public transit options, to banking options.

Establish a company contact person
There may be a natural first (or only) point of contact. If not, it’s a good idea to establish one so it’s clear who your new employee can contact with any questions.

Arrange airport pick-up and transportation
Once a visa is approved, travel planning can begin. Arrange to pick up your new employee and their family at the airport and drive them to their transitional housing where they’ll spend their first few weeks. Make sure you’re updated on any changes to the itinerary. Make sure you know what the family needs: What luggage are they bringing? Are there children or infants to transport?

Arrange transitional housing
Once a visa is approved and travel planning begins, arrange transitional housing close to the workplace. You should plan on one housing location for at least four weeks. This is meant to be truly transitional – a place for your new employee and their family to stay while they search for rental housing. In exceptional cases, you might consider helping them to identify rental housing before arrival. However, note that it is generally better for someone to view and select their own rental unit according to their needs and comfort after arrival.

Agree on a start date approximately one to two weeks after arrival
Having a start date later than the arrival date will give your new employee a chance to discover their new community and time to prepare for their new role.
Consider a pay advance

If the option exists for your company, consider asking your new employee if they could use a pay advance to help cover living costs upon arrival. Everyone’s financial situation is different, but refugees typically have little or no savings.

Extend your health plan

Depending on your province or territory, consider offering an inpatriate health plan in addition to regular coverage. Inpatriate health plans provide employees and their dependents who have recently arrived in Canada basic health care until they satisfy the waiting period for government-sponsored healthcare coverage. For example, in Ontario, newcomers are not eligible for OHIP until three months after residing in the province.

Purchase a SIM card and cell phone

Your new employee will need a local SIM card which might not be supported by their old phone (or they might not have a phone.) Purchasing a SIM card and cell phone will ensure that you can contact each other when needed.

Purchase a laptop

Many refugees don’t own a personal laptop. Your new employee may need a laptop not only for work but also to research and access settlement services in the new community.

Stock the fridge

Stocking the fridge with essential/basic groceries that will last your new employee a few days can be a small action that goes a long way as they arrive after a very long trip. Locating grocery stores immediately upon arrival can be a challenge if they are exhausted or do not yet have a local SIM card. Eating out can be stressful if they arrive with little savings.

Host an information session for staff

The team at your company may benefit from learning more about refugee circumstances in general, and your role in this unique form of recruitment, prior to the arrival of your new employee. Speak with TBB for ideas about organizing a session.
Good Practices After Arrival

These are some ideas for you to consider as you prepare for the settlement of your new employee and their family.

Provide orientation

After your new employee arrives, you can officially welcome them into their new community. A good way of doing this might be showing them around the city, showing them where they will be working, visiting grocery stores in their area, and explaining public transportation. An orientation to the city may be very helpful on the second day after arrival (after a good night’s sleep).

Accompany to key appointments

A few key appointments should be completed in the first few days after arrival. You can provide valuable support by driving and accompanying your new employee to these stops: 1) The provincial government service office to apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN) card for everyone in the family; and 2) A bank to open a new Canadian bank account. We advise you to check in advance and ensure your employee brings along all required paperwork to complete these steps.

Ask if they have enough cash to cover basic necessities

It can several days to set up a bank account and have access to a debit card, and longer to receive a credit card. Your new employee will likely arrive with some Canadian Dollars in cash, but it may dwindle faster than expected. Don’t be shy to ask if they have enough cash to purchase basics like groceries before having access to a bank account. If they don’t, consider extending a petty cash loan from the office or a small personal loan.

Schedule a drop-in

As part of the orientation to the city, a short/informal drop-in to the work location before the start date can be helpful. It provides a picture of the working environment and a chance to meet new colleagues. A drop-in can also be a chance to pick up any human resources paperwork or training material if needed in advance.

Host a welcome meal

Hosting a welcome meal with your new employee will give them and you a chance to meet and get to know each other in an informal setting before you starting working together. You can also invite a handful of colleagues who they will be working with.

Support the housing search

Your new employee should start looking for permanent housing in the first few days. You can support the search by suggesting areas they should be looking at and connecting them with realtors or other support agencies if your company has partnerships with any. A common requirement to sign a lease is having a credit check; your new employee will not be able to procure one. You can consider being a guarantor or a co-signer to help them sign a lease. Or, you can consider encouraging the landlord to be flexible, explaining the unique circumstances of this applicant.
Good Practices At Work

These are some ideas for you to consider as you prepare for the start date of your new employee.

Establish flexible working hours in weeks one and two

Your new employee will be adjusting to a new job as well as a new life, and will likely have multiple appointments to attend in the first few weeks during business hours. These include visits to the bank, the settlement agency, government offices to apply for a health card, and local schools if they have children to enroll.

Assign a buddy

A designated colleague who can be a ‘buddy’ is a different type of support than supervisors and managers can provide. A buddy is a peer who can also provide informal guidance on the workplace culture, introductions to other colleagues, and in general serve as more of a friend.

Schedule regular check-ins with a supervisor

Set up regular check-ins with your new employee. You can use this time to discuss work-related tasks, expectations, and any challenges they’re experiencing and ways of overcoming them. Language is one challenge experienced by many newcomers with English as a second language; consider strategies to overcome this challenge in the short term, such as recapping group or team meetings together one-on-one to ensure essentials are understood. You can also use this time to check-in on how they’re doing with settlement.

Be informed about the cultural needs of your new employee

Your new employee might be coming from a very different cultural background. Take the time to learn if there are any practices that might be impacting their work. For example, your new employee might be fasting during Ramadan (a holy month in Islam). You can consider having in-office meetings during this period instead of having lunch meetings. They might also be celebrating other holidays. Ask about dietary restrictions if you plan workplace meals or snacks. You can also ask about when and where they are planning to pray if they are a practicing Muslim, and if any workplace accommodations may be helpful.

These two resources provide good background and tips for accommodating prayer in the workplace:

- [Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia](#) (page 9)
- [National Council of Canadian Muslims](#) (page 9)
Maintain regular contact with TBB

If there are any issues or concerns regarding the onboarding or general wellbeing of your new employee, get in touch with your Talent Beyond Boundaries contact.

Canada
Dana Wagner
Canada  Director
dwagner@talentbeyondboundaries.org