

Operational Bulletin 228 - August 17, 2010

Visa Office Referred (VOR) and Joint Assistance Sponsorships (JAS) for Refugees – New Templates and Instructions

Issue

The VOR and JAS Programs – New Templates and Instructions

Visa Office Referrals (VOR) and **Joint-Assistance Sponsorships (JAS)** are important mechanisms through which refugees selected for resettlement can benefit from the settlement and integration support provided by sponsoring groups in Canada. This Operational Bulletin introduces new templates for referring VOR and JAS cases for sponsorship, and supplements the instructions provided in chapter 5 of the Overseas Processing (OP) Manual.

Background

Visa Office Referrals (VOR)

In the VOR program, visa offices identify refugees from their inventory for private sponsorship. A VOR case is initiated either by the visa office in order to facilitate the resettlement of a selected case, or by the sponsoring group in Canada in order to resettle a case with a particular profile.

The VOR program serves to increase the protection space available for refugees in need of resettlement. It helps ensure that selected refugees who are ready to travel can proceed to Canada quickly as privately sponsored refugees (PSRs), even if there are insufficient government-assisted refugee (GAR) spaces available in the current year's target. The VOR program also offers sponsoring groups the opportunity to welcome a refugee family that is travel-ready at the time of referral.

VOR referrals can be made at any time during the year to the [Matching Centre](#). The most appropriate cases for referral are small families or single adults **without special needs**, since these can be matched readily with sponsors. For those cases with high needs, JAS is the preferred option.

Joint Assistance Sponsorships (JAS)

The JAS program enables sponsoring groups to partner with CIC in the resettlement of refugees who, because of special needs or circumstances, are expected to require an extended resettlement period and support over and above that which is provided either through government assistance or regular private sponsorship alone.

Under the JAS program, private sponsors provide resettled refugees with orientation, significant settlement assistance, and emotional support to supplement the financial assistance and immediate and essential services available through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). Given the extra attention and care, JAS cases can reasonably

be expected to adapt to life in Canada within the period of support, which is normally 12-24 months but which, in exceptional circumstances only, can extend to 36 months.

In order to be eligible for a JAS, the refugee:

- must be a member of the Convention Refugees Abroad Class, the Source Country Class or the Country of Asylum Class;
- must have a greater need of settlement assistance than other Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) because of exceptional resettlement needs such as one or more of the following:
 - physical or mental disability which could require treatment in Canada;
 - unusual family configuration such as single-parent families with several young children or families consisting only of siblings, one or more of whom has assumed parental responsibilities;
 - separated minors;
 - elderly persons;
 - other special needs identified by the visa office.

Step by Step Procedures for VOR and JAS Referrals

The following instructions for VOR referrals are supplementary to those in OP5:

1. Identify a travel-ready case on which the eligibility assessment and medical, security and criminality screening have been completed (positive selection, background, and medical decisions). VOR cases should not have settlement needs exceeding those found generally within the refugee population whereas JAS cases must meet the special needs criteria above.
2. Ensure that the applicants have provided their signed consent to the release of personal information from their file to settlement service providers including sponsors. These authorizations are found on the Refugee Referral Form (RRF) from UNHCR and/or on the "Authority to Disclose Personal Information and Declaration" in Schedule 2 of the IMM 0008 (to be completed at interview for all refugee and humanitarian protected persons abroad cases).
3. Fill out the [VOR Referral Template \(Annex 1\)](#) or the [JAS Referral Template \(Annex 2\)](#) and be sure to include settlement needs information both from interview notes and from medical notes (based on the *IMM 5544B Resettlement Needs Assessment Form* completed by the DMP).
4. Save the completed template as a *Word* document, attach it to an e-mail message, and send it to the Matching Centre (Matching-Centre@cic.gc.ca).
5. The Matching Centre will prepare a refugee profile and post it on a secure website (www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/jas.asp) that is accessible to Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) and local Citizenship and Immigration Centres (CICs).
6. Once the case is matched with a sponsor willing to support the refugees after their arrival in Canada, the Matching Centre will advise the visa office to proceed with finalization and Notification of Arrival Transmission (NAT).

Role of the Visa Office in Facilitating Communication between Sponsors and Applicants

Once a sponsoring group has undertaken to sponsor a case under the JAS or VOR programs, they are encouraged to establish contact with the refugee(s) prior to their arrival in Canada. Early communication, initiated through a letter of introduction containing settlement information, helps both refugee and sponsor to understand what they can expect from each other, and eases the integration process.

CIC can facilitate this communication in two ways:

1. If the applicants can be contacted directly, the visa office will include their contact information (mailing address, e-mail address, and/or telephone number), on the VOR/JAS referral template. The Matching Centre will share this with the sponsoring group once the undertaking has been signed.
2. If the applicants live in a refugee camp and cannot be contacted directly, the visa office will transmit *one* piece of correspondence from the sponsoring group to IOM, UNHCR, or another organization in the camp that can pass on the message to the refugees. Such messages will be brief, and will be sent to the visa office by the local CIC or the Matching Centre as e-mail attachments.

For Further Information

If you have questions about VOR and JAS procedures, or wish to discuss specific cases, contact RIM in the International Region (Nat-Operational-RIM@cic.gc.ca) and/or the Matching Centre (Matching-Centre@cic.gc.ca).

ANNEX 1: VOR Referral Template

When completed, send to: Matching-Centre@cic.gc.ca

VOR REFERRAL

VISA OFFICE:

FILE NUMBER:

URGENCY (high, medium, low):

ETHNICITY:

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:

COUNTRY OF CURRENT RESIDENCE:

FAMILY SIZE:

PRINCIPAL APPLICANT:

- Gender (M/F):
- DOB:
- Education:
- Official language(s) spoken:
- Other language(s) spoken:
- Work experience/skills:

- Special settlement needs/assistance required:
(Include information from the IMM 5544 "Resettlement Needs Assessment Form")

SPOUSE:

- Gender (M/F):
- DOB:
- Education:
- Official language(s) spoken:
- Other language(s) spoken:
- Work experience/skills:
- Special settlement needs/assistance required:
(Include information from the IMM 5544 "Resettlement Needs Assessment Form")

ACCOMPANYING CHILDREN:

(Include the following information for each)

- Relationship to HOF:
- Gender (M/F):
- DOB:
- Education:
- Official language(s) spoken:
- Other language(s) spoken:
- Work experience/skills:
- Special settlement needs/assistance required:
(Include information from the IMM 5544 "Resettlement Needs Assessment Form")

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Case summary:
(Describe case. Detailed information about the refugee claim will assist in finding a sponsor.)
- Non-accompanying family members listed on IMM8 (Y/N):
(Indicate number of persons eligible for OYW, relationship to HOF, reasons why not accompanying)
- Relatives on linked cases:
(Indicate file number(s) of XREF cases not requiring VOR sponsorship, relationship to HOF)
- Relatives in other countries:
(Indicate relationship to HOF, country of residence)
- Travel ready (Y/N):
(If not travel ready, provide current case status. Travel arrangements, such as exit permits and flight bookings are to be arranged once a sponsor is found.)
- Expiry date of medicals:
- Estimated timeframe to departure once sponsor found:

- Recommended destination:
-

The information below will not be posted to the JAS/VOR matching website:

NAME OF REFUGEE CAMP AND LENGTH OF STAY:

(If applicable)

RELIGION:

(Taken into consideration when planning appropriate settlement services)

REFUGEE CONTACT INFORMATION:

- Mailing address:
- Telephone number:
- E-mail address:

RELATIVES/FRIENDS IN CANADA:

- Name:
 - Residence address:
 - Telephone number:
 - E-mail address:
 - Relationship:
-

ANNEX 2: JAS Referral Template

When completed, send to: Matching-Centre@cic.gc.ca

JAS REFERRAL

VISA OFFICE:

FILE NUMBER:

URGENCY (high, medium, low):

ETHNICITY:

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:

COUNTRY OF CURRENT RESIDENCE:

FAMILY SIZE:

PRINCIPAL APPLICANT:

- Gender (M/F):
- DOB:
- Education:
- Official language(s) spoken:
- Other language(s) spoken:

- Work experience/skills:
- Special settlement needs/assistance required:
(Include information from the IMM 5544 "Resettlement Needs Assessment Form")

SPOUSE:

- Gender (M/F):
- DOB:
- Education:
- Official language(s) spoken:
- Other language(s) spoken:
- Work experience/skills:
- Special settlement needs/assistance required:
(Include information from the IMM 5544 "Resettlement Needs Assessment Form")

ACCOMPANYING CHILDREN:

(Include the following information for each)

- Relationship to HOF:
- Gender (M/F):
- DOB:
- Education:
- Official language(s) spoken:
- Other language(s) spoken:
- Work experience/skills:
- Special settlement needs/assistance required:
(Include information from the IMM 5544 "Resettlement Needs Assessment Form")

REASON FOR JAS REQUEST

(Mark with an "X" all that apply)

- Family size:
- Medical needs/Disability:
- Victim of Trauma or torture:
- Illiterate/Limited education:
- Elderly:
- Woman at Risk:
- Urgent Protection:
- Other (specify):

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Case summary:
(Describe case. Detailed information about the refugee claim will assist in finding a sponsor.)

- Non-accompanying family members listed on IMM 8 (Y/N):
(Indicate number of persons eligible for OYW, relationship to HOF, reasons why not accompanying)
- Relatives on linked cases:
(Indicate file number(s) of XREF cases not requiring VOR sponsorship, relationship to HOF)
- Relatives in other countries:
(Indicate relationship to HOF, country of residence)
- Travel ready (Y/N):
(If not travel ready, provide current case status. Travel arrangements, such as exit permits and flight bookings are to be arranged once a sponsor is found.)
- Expiry date of medicals:
- Estimated timeframe to departure once sponsor found:
- Recommended destination:

The information below will not be posted to the JAS/VOR matching website:

NAME OF REFUGEE CAMP AND LENGTH OF STAY:

(If applicable)

RELIGION:

(Taken into consideration when planning appropriate settlement services)

REFUGEE CONTACT INFORMATION:

- Mailing address:
- Telephone number:
- E-mail address:

RELATIVES/FRIENDS IN CANADA:

- Name:
- Residence address:
- Telephone number:
- E-mail address:
- Relationship:

For CIC use only:

CONTRIBUTION

Requested (Y/N):

Approved (Y/N):

If partial, provide details: