

## Tipsheet: Prepare for your refugee hearing

This tipsheet can help you get ready for your refugee hearing. It explains what to expect after you filed your Basis of Claim (BOC) form and your refugee claim is sent to the Refugee Protection Division (RPD).

A member of the RPD decides your claim, usually after an online hearing using Microsoft Teams. **You must attend your hearing** at the date and time listed on the **Notice to Appear** that the RPD sends you by mail. Join **15 minutes** before the hearing starts.

- Have a refugee lawyer, paralegal, or licensed immigration consultant represent you and give you **legal advice** about your situation. They're called Counsel. Learn more at [stepstojustice.ca/refugeehelp](https://stepstojustice.ca/refugeehelp).

If you have a low income, Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) might pay for a lawyer. Call LAO at **1-800-668-8258**. For TTY, call **711**.

- Tell the RPD **in writing** if your phone number, email, or address changes. You must also tell both Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) **and** the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA).
- Gather **evidence** to support your claim. You must file it at least **10 days** before the hearing. Learn more at [stepstojustice.ca/refevidence](https://stepstojustice.ca/refevidence).
- Review your **BOC and narrative**. Tell your Counsel if there are **mistakes, updates, or missing information** and ask if any documents need to be corrected. File any BOC amendments at least 10 days before the hearing. Learn more at [stepstojustice.ca/changeBOC](https://stepstojustice.ca/changeBOC).

The Member **compares** what you say at the hearing with your BOC, narrative, portal, forms, past interview answers, prior immigration applications, what any witnesses you bring say, and any evidence you file. If the evidence is not consistent, the Member may not believe you.

- Plan where to join the videoconference hearing from:
  - **Home or another space:** have a quiet, private room with a good internet connection, a computer or tablet with a webcam and microphone, and access to Microsoft Teams. Have a phone nearby for technical issues.
  - **RPD office:** you can use a private room and computer. Make sure to ask the RPD at least **10 working days** before the hearing.
  - **Counsel's office:** ask your Counsel if you can attend from their office.
- You are entitled to an **interpreter** but you must ask for one at least **10 days before** the hearing, if you have not already asked for one in your BOC.
- Get the **hearing link**. The RPD emails it to you or your Counsel a few days before the hearing. Check your Junk Mail folder and tell the RPD if you do not receive it.
- You can ask for **accommodations**. Ask the RPD in writing as soon as possible and no later than **10 days before** the hearing. Here are some examples:
  - a Member with extra training on gender-based claims
  - a Member and interpreter of a particular gender
  - frequent breaks and having a support person present

For more information about refugee hearings, you can attend a free online **Ready Tour**. You can register online at [myrefugeeclaim.ca/en/ready-tours](https://myrefugeeclaim.ca/en/ready-tours).

- If you want **witnesses** to give evidence by speaking at your hearing, send their details to the RPD at least **10 days before**. Your Counsel must prepare them.
- Meet with your Counsel** so they can prepare you to answer questions at your hearing. Your answers are also evidence.
- Plan **childcare** for the hearing. Claimants under 18 usually do not need to attend.
- Have any **originals** of documents you filed, envelopes you got evidence in by mail, and your **document package** nearby during the hearing.

You can find more information about refugee law at [stepstojustice.ca](https://stepstojustice.ca). This is general legal information for people in Ontario, Canada. It's not legal advice. Cette publication est également disponible en français. Reviewed: February 2025.