

March 18, 2020

Hello MCC Sponsors,



“When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’” – Fred Rogers of Mr. Rogers’ Neighbourhood

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Amidst these challenging times, we want to first thank you for **being helpers**. For being individuals committed to supporting the most vulnerable in our world, and for working to create safe and welcoming communities for all.

We are writing to share the following update we have received from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) on the current impact of COVID 19 on refugee resettlement in Canada,

*The Prime Minister announced that Canada will bar entry to all foreign travellers who are not Canadian citizens or permanent residents, with certain exceptions. **IRCC is working with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to cancel all refugee arrivals in March and April.** Individual notices on flight cancellations are being sent via email over the coming days. The Resettlement Operations Centre – Ottawa (ROC-O) will contact you directly if the refugees you are preparing to receive will not be travelling. However, a limited number of refugees are already in transit and will arrive on March 17 and 18, 2020. Please note that there will be no additional arrivals or new flight bookings after these dates until further notice.*

Per the advice of the Public Health Agency of Canada all international travelers arriving in Canada are to follow the guidance published by the [Public Health Agency of Canada](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/travelers.html) to:

- *Self-isolate for 14 days after arrival in Canada.*
- *Monitor their health for **fever, cough or difficulty breathing**.*
- *Wash their hands often for 20 seconds and cover their mouth and nose with their arm when coughing or sneezing.*

*If they develop a **fever, cough or difficulty breathing** within 14 days:*

- *Continue to isolate themselves from others*
- *Immediately call a health care professional or public health authority and:
 - *describe symptoms and travel history*
 - *follow the instructions of health professionals or public health authority carefully.**

*Resettlement Assistance Provider Service Provider Organizations and **sponsors are advised to assist refugees in seeking and explaining the appropriate services available to them if they develop symptoms.***

Additionally, we would like to share the following resources to equip you as you help newcomers understand what coronavirus is and how to navigate self-isolation measures.

*For some, peace is a wish. For MCC, peace is a **call to action.***

- Some basic coronavirus information has been translated into different languages – [see bottom of this webpage.](#)
- Where newcomers are arriving to live in the same accommodations as others, please [check this link for guidance on how to isolate at home.](#)
- Attempt to maintain as much contact as possible with newcomers over the phone or via video calls. Make use of online translation services as necessary, see: [Language Line Solutions](#)
- Protect members of your sponsorship group who are at a higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, namely, older adults or individuals with serious chronic medical conditions including: heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease.
- [This link](#) has live-streamed events to music, dance, theatre and storytelling.
- [This link](#) has some useful suggestions re; keeping children engaged at home.

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As this is a new experience for most of us, we would like to create an online space where we can connect and support each other in navigating next steps.

Join MCC staff for an online check-in on **Friday March 20 at 12pm**. We will come together to connect about the questions you may have, additional tools and resources you may recommend, and an opportunity to group think about strategies to support newcomers through this difficult time. Call-in details as follows,

Topic: COVID 19 – Check In on Supports for Newcomers
Time: Mar 20, 2020 12:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: <https://mcc.zoom.us/j/612893536>

Or by Telephone:

Dial: +1 669 900 6833 (US) or +1 647 558 0588 (Canada)

Meeting ID: 612 893 536

Please do not hesitate to reach out to our team with any questions or concerns that may arise. We are here to support you! Note – our team is working remotely from home, e-mail is the best way to connect with us during this time however, if you leave us a voicemail, we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Thank you again for being the helpers our communities need right now.

Serving with you,

MCC Ontario's Refugee Resettlement Team