

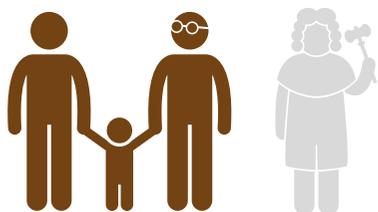
## FACT SHEET # 8

# RACIALIZED POVERTY IN IMMIGRATION & NEWCOMER SETTLEMENT

### How are immigrants and refugees systemically disadvantaged?

- **Detention:** Canada does not impose a maximum time limit on immigration detention. In 2017, the Ontario Superior Court ordered the release of a West African immigration detainee held in a maximum-security jail for seven years (including 103 consecutive days spent in solitary confinement).

Racialized asylum seekers from countries outside North America/Europe who claim persecution on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity are disadvantaged in the refugee process. Lawyers representing LGBTQ2S+ claimants have reported instances of clients being asked graphic and intrusive questions about sexual practices during hearings. These disadvantages are compounded by the frequent inadequacy of translation services.



- **Settlement services:** Refugee claimants, migrant workers and undocumented are over-represented in poverty, and are not eligible for federally funded settlement services including language training. Often they are most in need of such supports.
- **Canada Child Benefit (CCB):** Parents with precarious immigration status are excluded from the Canada Child Benefit, which was introduced as a poverty reduction measure. Even Canadian-born children of such parents are denied access to the CCB.

- **Family:** Family reunification is denied to many by immigration rules that exclude siblings and extended family; refugee children cannot sponsor parents or siblings; and those living below the LICO or on social assistance are ineligible to sponsor.
- **Language:** Interpretation and translation services are limited and not available to access even basic services such as health and housing. Those with few financial resources often rely on children, family, friends or acquaintances to interpret, even in circumstances that are confidential or sensitive.

- **Economic immigrants** are workers and their families who are accepted into Canada because of their skills or education.
- **Family Class immigrants** are people who are sponsored by a family member who lives in Canada.
- **Convention refugees** are granted protection in Canada because they face persecution in another country.
- **Refugee claimants** are people who are in Canada and have made a claim for protection. Over half such claims are denied.
- **“Non-status”, “undocumented” or “irregular”** refers to anyone living in Canada who cannot obtain legal status for a variety of reasons, or had a legal resident status that expired.
- **Regularization** means that non-status, undocumented or irregular status individuals are given the opportunity to apply for legal status in Canada.



A 2011 employment audit study on Canadian hiring practices found job applicants with Asian names and foreign education, but all Canadian work experience were almost 30% less likely to be called for a job interview compared to applicants with an Anglo name; over 46% less likely to be called if they had a mix of Canadian and foreign experience; and over 62% less likely to be called if they only had international experience.



- Data: Canada Border Services Agency does not publish detention statistics disaggregated on the basis of race, ethnicity, faith/spirituality or country of origin.

### Quick Notes

- When we refer to peoples of colour we speak of Canadians of non-European background or heritage - both people of colour who are Canadian-born as well as those who are born elsewhere.
- When we refer to Indigenous Peoples, we speak of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis persons.
- In Toronto, 62% of all persons living in poverty are from racialized groups.
- 52% of Canada's racialized people living in poverty reside in Ontario.
- Households that fall below Canada's low income cut-off (LICO) or low income measure (LIM), spend a much larger percent of their income on basic necessities like food and shelter than the average family; this is how we measure poverty.
- Systemic racism is often caused by hidden institutional biases in policies, practices and processes that privilege or disadvantage certain groups of people. It can be the result of doing things the way they have always been done without considering how they affect particular groups differently.

- Minors: According to data provided by Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), 6,251 people were held in immigration detention in 2016/2017, including 151 minors.
- Employment Insurance: Changes introduced to the program in 2012 by the previous Conservative government dramatically reduced eligibility for people living in larger urban centres - disproportionately impacting peoples of colour and immigrants.



The number of “non-status” people has grown largely due to unfair immigration and refugee laws that deny legal status to many, including migrant workers recruited for low-paid jobs. Without status and despite paying taxes they cannot work legally and are at higher risk of abuse and exploitation; cannot seek police protection without fear of deportation; and cannot access most programs and services.

## WHAT'S BEING DONE?

**Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR)** is a not-for-profit umbrella organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees in Canada and around the world, and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada.

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**OCASI - Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants** is an umbrella organization that is the collective voice of immigrant and refugee-serving agencies in Ontario, and advocates for access and equity for the sector and the individuals and communities they serve.

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