



& BREAD BORDERS

**EXPLORING FEARS, FACTS
& IMPACTS ABOUT REFUGEE
CLAIMANTS IN MANITOBA**

A RESOURCE FOR ENGAGING IN MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE

Prepared by the Refugee Public Awareness Coalition (Manitoba)

Bread & Borders

Exploring Fears, Facts and Impacts About Refugee Claimants in Manitoba

In January 2017, a cross-sectoral meeting was held in Winnipeg to develop a coordinated response to the arrival of increasing numbers of Refugee Claimants to Manitoba. While working to address the basic housing, transportation and settlement needs of these newcomers, there was recognition that a negative public narrative had emerged that was driven by misinformation and misunderstanding.

To respond to this, a number of individuals volunteered to be part of a group focused on public education activities. Initially, they were known as the *Refugee Claimant Public Education Working Group (Winnipeg)*, and have evolved into the *Refugee Public Awareness Coalition (Manitoba)*, or *RPAC (Manitoba)*.

To assist their efforts, RPAC (Manitoba) developed this resource as a way to engage people directly, while helping to address common myths and misconceptions about Refugee Claimants. It is hoped that these materials will be useful to Manitobans seeking to build welcoming communities for all.

September 2017

Bread & Borders Contents:

1. **Bread & Borders: Before You Begin.** A general orientation to the resource that helps determine which is the best tool to use for your context, with some key points to consider.
2. **Bread & Borders: Conversation Process for “New Friends.”** A Conversation Circle format for when not everyone knows each other.
3. **Bread & Borders: Conversation Process for “Old Friends.”** A Conversation Circle format for when everyone knows each other.
4. **Bread & Borders: Conversation Process for Unpacking Fears, Facts and Impacts.** A Conversation Circle format for exploring common myths/misconceptions about Refugee Claimants [to be used with accompanying pages containing *Myths/Misconceptions* and *Fears, Facts & Impacts* question sheets].
5. **Bread & Borders: Refugee Quiz and Answer Key.** An introductory activity for groups of any size that overviews some key issues related to the topic.
6. **Bread & Borders: Engagement Process for Medium-Large Sized Groups.** An engagement/dialogue process for medium to larger-sized groups that focuses on unpacking common myths/misconceptions about Refugee Claimants.
7. **“Refugee Rights: Where Do You Stand?”** A *Four Corners* engagement/dialogue activity for medium to larger-sized groups that focuses on exploring perspectives about Refugees in Canada [to be used with accompanying four signs].
8. **Common Myths/Misconceptions About Refugees.** An overview of eight common myth/misconceptions about Refugees, with clarifying context and supporting links.
9. **Talking about Refugees and Immigrants: A Glossary** (Canadian Council for Refugees)
10. **Bread & Borders: Exploring Fears, Facts & Impacts About Refugee Claimants in Manitoba - Sources and Additional Resources**
11. **Bread & Borders: Tips for the Hosting Conversation Circles about Refugee Claimants**
12. **Bread & Borders: Agreements.** Conversation Agreements on a single page.
13. **Bread & Borders: 8 Ways to Take Action**
14. **Bread & Borders: Process & Tool Feedback Form.** A feedback form to help RPAC (Manitoba) improve this resource.

Bread & Borders: Exploring Fears, Facts & Impacts about Refugee Claimants ***“Before You Begin...”***

Thank you for choosing to use this resource! Note that it has been designed for use by anyone seeking to assess, develop and/or deepen their understanding; experience with facilitating and/or knowledge of refugee issues are not required. Before you start, however, here are some points to consider:

Which process/tool to use?

1. How much time do you have? The underlying goal of this resource is to help people dig deeper into their perspectives; choose a process that will allow enough time for critical reflection and discussion. If you have less than an hour, consider choosing a process that introduces the ideas (i.e., the *Refugee Quiz* or *Refugee Rights: Where Do You Stand?*).
2. How large is your group? The three “Conversation Processes” are best used when the group consists of less than 12 people. If your group is larger than this you are more likely to maximize individual engagement by using the three tools suitable for larger groups.
3. What is the intended audience’s general awareness of refugee issues?
 - a. If people know little about the issues, it’s better to use a process that educates as it teases out their understandings and perspectives. The *Refugee Quiz* can be a good starting point. As part of your opening/framing, it can also be helpful to share a video or news story that helps to explain the issue (see *Sources & Additional Resources*); or refer to the *Talking About Refugees and Immigrants – A Glossary*.
 - b. If people are fairly familiar with the issues, it can be more effective to use a tool that allows them to express their own perspectives, and dig deeper into explaining why they think/feel what they do (i.e., the *Conversation Process for Old Friends*, the *Refugee Rights: Where Do You Stand?* process, or one of the tools for *Unpacking the Myths*).

*If you’re unsure about the group’s awareness (or even if you want to ensure that people are starting out at basically the same level of understanding), you can do a simple check-in to help you assess by asking, “*What do you know about the Refugee Claimant situation happening here?*” and inviting answers. Don’t write anything or validate the answers (so that you don’t pre-empt yourself when using a tool). Based on the answers you’ll likely get a sense of which tool to use/adapt.
4. What physical space do you have to work with? The processes involve engagement and conversation. Is there wall space available for flipcharts, or tables/comfortable seating? For larger groups where concurrent conversations may be ongoing, do people have space to move around, or are they far away enough from other groups so that they won’t be distracted (i.e., by loud conversations or difficult acoustics)? If people are not comfortable, or the space is not conducive to conversation, they may not engage, and you may be doing a disservice to your efforts.

General Comments on Using This Resource:

- ❖ While the title of this *Bread & Borders* resource is focussed on Refugee Claimants crossing the border in Manitoba, note that the tool often explores broader perspectives on Claimants/Asylum Seekers and Refugees in various Canadian locations (as often the experiences are similar, or people's understandings have not recognized the differences).
- ❖ When using the processes that explore the myths/misconceptions, consider limiting the number you have the group discuss so that the conversations can go deeper (i.e., rather than rushing through as many as you can).
- ❖ You'll note that the processes are designed in such a way as to draw out people's perspectives rather than evaluate/judge them. As many people are at different places in their understanding, and conversations about these topics can become heated or polarizing, we have intentionally set out to create processes that allow for safety for all; each person's experience is relevant and valid to them. In the spirit of dialogue and learning, information based on facts/statistics/data is provided (with the sources listed) so that people can make up their own minds about the issues.
- ❖ Note that an *Infographic Poster on Refugee Claimants* is also available for use. Please contact Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (Social Planning Council of Winnipeg) for copies: <https://www.ipwinnipeg.org/community>

The Refugee Public Awareness Coalition (Manitoba) acknowledges that this work was created on Treaty One land, home of the Cree, Anishinaabe, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene peoples; and the homeland of the Métis Nation.

We are committed to working in partnership with Indigenous community members and organizations to reduce the ongoing impact of colonization as we attempt to increase the understanding of issues facing refugees/refugee claimants.

In the spirit of reconciliation and creating *right relationships*, when delivering any of these tools we strongly encourage facilitators to offer a similar opening acknowledgement of the original peoples of this land.

If you have any questions about this resource, or would like to access a Speakers Bureau consisting of people who can provide a "lived experience" perspective, please email breadandborders@mtsmail.ca