

6. Lost Canadians and Family Reunification

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Canadian citizenship rules changed in 2025, when people who *should* have inherited Canadian citizenship from their parents and grandparents were added back into the rules.

For family members who didn’t inherit citizenship, Canadian citizens and landed immigrants can still sponsor their spouse/partner and children to come to Canada.

Reunification is backlogged, but there is now a ten-year “super visa” for parents and grandparents, created as a partial mitigation. The backlogged process was unfair to people like Maria Torres, who wrote that her “71-year-old mother can only visit on a tourist visa. Every goodbye might be the last.”

<https://immigcanada.com/the-silent-struggle-of-family-reunification/>

6.1 Citizenship by Birth and “Lost Canadians”

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-citizenship/become-canadian-citizen/eligibility/already-citizen.html>

In 2009, a not-very-nice Prime Minister stripped away rights to inheriting citizenship that had been established in 1977. In 2025, we fixed that. Now, you can apply to gain/regain Canadian citizenship.

A Canadian citizen parent can always pass on citizenship to a child born outside of Canada if that parent was either 1) born in Canada or 2) naturalized before the birth of their child. The 2009 changes blocked people who were

- born to Canadian parents who were also born abroad (ie, the second generation abroad,)
- adopted by first-generation Canadians born abroad.

We fixed that. Now a Canadian parent born or adopted abroad can pass citizenship to their child born abroad before 2025. If the child was born after 2025 the parent would need to “spend three years in Canada prior to the child's birth or adoption”

In short, you’re already a citizen if you’re

- born in Canada
- born outside Canada and your parents were Canadian citizens at time of birth, or

- born outside of Canada, to parents whose ancestors were considered Canadian, under the same rules.

If any of these is true, you can apply for a citizenship certificate, and use that to apply for a Canadian passport. You'll need

- birth certificates,
- your parents' or other ancestor's Canadian citizenship documents, and
- proof of your parent's status at time of your birth.

It's not actually *hard*, but there is a lot of just plain work, described in

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides/guide-0001-application-citizenship-certificate-adults-minors-proof-citizenship-section-3.html>

Resources

- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada pages on the new rules
 - <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-citizenship/act-changes/rules-2025.html>
 - <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2025/12/bill-c-3-an-act-to-amend-the-citizenship-act-2025-comes-into-effect.html>
- 2025 changes, <https://immigration.ca/claiming-canadian-citizenship-by-descent-under-canadas-new-citizenship-act-bill-c-3/>
- borderlines podcast #194 – *Are You Now a Canadian?* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1siBJvxqc9Q>
- discussion group at <https://www.reddit.com/r/Canadiancitizenship/> Also see their FAQs
- facebook group, *Canadian Citizenship by Descent (Bill C-3)* at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/501813032715040>
- <https://www.cascadiadaily.com/2026/feb/28/new-law-opens-door-to-citizenship-for-lost-canadians-in-bellingham-and-beyond>

6.2 Family Reunification and Sponsorship

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/family-sponsorship/spouse-partner-children/who-you-can-sponsor.html>

Sponsorship for refugees is different, see Chapter 9, *As a True Refugee*.

Typical *family* reunification is citizens and permanent residents sponsoring their spouse/partner and children, as well as a program for sponsoring entire families. There is a related mechanism to grant a “super visa” for parents/grandparents to live in Canada for ten years at a time periods, to deal with the excessive backlogs.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/parent-grandparent-super-visa/eligibility.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/parent-grandparent-super-visa/forms-documents.html>

Resources

- [immigration.ca](https://www.immigration.ca)
 - <https://immigration.ca/family-sponsorship-immigration-overview/>
 - <https://immigration.ca/what-are-the-options-for-bringing-parents-and-grandparents-to-canada-in-2026/>
- <https://moving2canada.com/immigration/family-sponsorship/>
- <https://www.fhplawyers.com/kelowna-legal-services/immigration-law/canada/spousal-sponsorships-and-family-reunification.html>
- <https://www.titanlaw.ca/family-sponsorship/>
- <https://www.canadavisa.com/cohen-immigration-law.html>

This is a live document. These links will change. Always refer to the government pages for current rules. And please file an issue at <https://codeberg.org/tokugawa-behr/Fleeing-to-Canada/issues> so I'll know what needs updating.

In Short

If you have Canadian ancestors, look and see if you're a Canadian already. If not, look at a family sponsorship.