

BUILDING BLOCKS OF COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

GUIDEBOOK AND PLANNING TOOLS BASED ON CANADA'S MODEL

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BUILDING A COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM: CHECKLIST

OVERARCHING CONSIDERATIONS

1. OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

Have you considered...

- Whether your community sponsorship program promotes the principle of refugee protection?
- Whether your community sponsorship program provides durable solutions?
- Whether your community sponsorship advances international responsibility sharing?
- Whether your community sponsorship program promotes the principle of additionality?
- How to respond to the need for family reunification in your resettlement program?
- How your program will encourage volunteerism and build communities?
- How you will ensure your community sponsorship program will remain accountable?

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Have you considered...

- What laws, regulations, policies, and procedures will be enacted to enable community sponsorship in your country?

OPERATIONAL DETAILS

A. REFUGEES: FROM ELIGIBILITY TO ARRIVAL

Have you considered...

- Who is eligible to be sponsored?
- The resources and partnerships needed to process refugees for private sponsorship?
- What information and resources you will provide refugees before they arrive in their resettlement country?
- How you will identify sponsorship-eligible refugees?
- How sponsors and refugees should communicate prior to refugees' arrival?
- How you will work with UNHCR as part of overseas processing?
- How you will transport refugees to your country and how you will choose their destinations?

B. SPONSORS: FROM MOBILIZATION TO ENGAGEMENT

Have you considered...

- How you will mobilize private actors to support refugee resettlement?
- If there are options other than sponsorship for communities to support refugees?
- Who will be eligible to sponsor and what their relationship to the government will be?
- How you will screen sponsors?
- How to ensure sponsors are aware of their responsibilities?
- The steps sponsors will need to take to prepare for the refugees' arrival?
- What training and resources will be needed for sponsors prior to and after refugees' arrival?

C. REFUGEE SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION

Have you considered...

- What legal status will the sponsored refugee have upon arrival?
- What arrangements need to be made for housing?
- What supports need to be put in place for job search and training?
- What types of post-arrival supports will be needed beyond those provided by sponsors?
- How refugees will access physical, mental, and dental health services?
- The educational needs of refugees?
- How refugees will be oriented to their new communities?
- How refugees will access language training?
- Who will cover the varying costs of settlement and integration?

D. THE REFUGEE-SPONSORSHIP RELATIONSHIP

Have you considered...

- What happens if sponsors want to withdraw their application before refugees arrive?
- How to manage expectations and resolve disputes between sponsors and refugees if they arise?
- What happens if a sponsorship breaks down after refugees arrive?
- What happens at the end of the sponsorship period?
- What special considerations may apply if relatives are among the sponsors?

1.A USING THIS GUIDEBOOK

This Guidebook was created to help public servants, civil society organizations, and community members research and design community-based refugee sponsorship programs in their countries. It divides a program model into 'building blocks', based on Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees system.

These building blocks represent the components of community sponsorship that people should consider when developing their own programs. While Canada's program is successful, it will not work in every country; the Guidebook is designed to encourage and support local actors as they design something tailored to their own context.

With its examples and case studies, the Guidebook also deals specifically and in a detailed way with the role of private sponsors in Canada's resettlement program. With this material, it intends to demonstrate how Canada's government structures its program and how civil society and private sponsors have organized in Canada. Canada's program has evolved considerably since it began and is just one example of how government and civil society can collaborate to provide protection to refugees and support their settlement once they arrive in their new country. It is not the only way, but it is one strong example from which other countries and civil society actors may draw inspiration.

Canada's model is also not perfect – Canadians are still learning and continuously evolving their program. Canada has a powerful tool that enables robust citizen engagement in refugee resettlement but it does not have a model that can or should be replicated exactly by another country. The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative hopes that this Guidebook will support local actors seeking to learn more about community sponsorship as well as offer concrete guidance to those working to design community sponsorship programs tailored to their own context.

1.B WHAT IS COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP?

B.1 Community Sponsorship in Brief

B.2 Canada's Refugee Resettlement Program

B.3 Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program

B.4 How is the Success of Community Sponsorship Evaluated?

B.5 Want to Learn More?

B.1 COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP IN BRIEF

Community sponsorship programs allow citizens and permanent residents to directly engage in refugee resettlement efforts. Individuals can form groups to become sponsors who commit to providing financial, emotional, and resettlement support to help newly-arrived refugees integrate into life in a new country. Community sponsorship is an opportunity for governments to work in close partnership with communities in resettling refugees. It can only be effective if there is a true partnership, and both government and community groups will need to commit to working together on everything ranging from high-level program design to the minutiae of resolving challenges with particular cases. Developing a relationship of mutual trust and respect is both one of the biggest challenges and one of the most rewarding aspects of community-based sponsorship programs.

Canada has resettled approximately 300,000 refugees through its Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program since it was introduced in 1979. Hundreds of communities across Canada have benefited by coming together to welcome privately sponsored refugees.

Canada enjoys positive outcomes among many newcomer groups. Statistics Canada reports that the children of refugees and other newcomers outperformed children with Canadian-born parents in terms of high school completion and university completion. Another Statistics Canada analysis shows that a majority of immigrants, including refugees, have a strong sense of belonging to Canada. Research on the Canadian PSR model specifically has shown that refugees resettled with the help of community sponsors also have very positive integration outcomes. For example, within five years of arrival, seventy percent of privately sponsored refugees were earning employment income, according to Statistics Canada. A further analysis reveals that twenty years after arrival (1993-2013 cohort), the median income of privately sponsored refugees is higher than the median Canadian income.

The success of Canada's private sponsorship program clearly demonstrates that community programs can build powerful bonds between sponsors and refugees, strengthen host communities, and foster positive attitudes towards refugees and resettlement. Canada's privately sponsored refugees also tend to have relatively early, positive integration and settlement outcomes, thanks in part to the social support they receive from sponsors.

RESOURCES

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<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/resettlement.asp>

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[http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?
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 Anna Mehler Paperny, "Refugees out-earn millionaire 'business class' immigrants years after arriving in Canada" (Globe and Mail, 22 January 2016)
<http://globalnews.ca/news/2468922/refugees-out-earn-millionaire-business-class-immigrants-years-after-arriving-in-canada/>

 Statistics Canada, "Educational and Labour Market Outcomes for Childhood Immigrants by Admission Class"
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2016377-eng.htm>

B.2 CANADA'S REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM

Immigration is an integral part of Canada's history and a key part of its future. Indeed, it would be impossible to tell the story of Canada without also telling the story of how it has been shaped by immigration. Immigration plays a key role in contributing to Canadians' well-being, economic prosperity, and success as a nation by balancing compassion, efficiency, and economic opportunity for all, while protecting Canadians' health, safety, and security. In 2017 some 300,000 people from all corners of the globe will take up permanent residence in Canada. Most will go on to become Canadian citizens.

As part of its permanent resident immigration stream Canada selects foreign nationals whose skills contribute to Canadian prosperity, as well their family members. Canada's humanitarian tradition and international obligations are also upheld by welcoming refugees and other people in need of protection to the country.

Resettlement is how Canada selects refugees abroad and supports their health, safety, and security as they settle in Canada. Each year Canada establishes the number of refugees who can be resettled through extensive consultations with other levels of government and civil society. Canada considers factors such as economic indicators, the availability of social services, global resettlement needs, and government budget mechanisms and constraints. Resettled refugees can be admitted to Canada through one of three programs:

- Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR) are referred by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), based on refugees' vulnerability. Upon arrival to Canada, these refugees receive twelve months of income support and other essential services from the government to support their settlement.
- Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR) are referred for resettlement to Canada by private sponsors – Canadian citizens or permanent residents. Under this stream, private sponsors provide financial support and settlement assistance during the refugees' first twelve months in Canada, or until the refugees are able to support themselves (whichever comes first).
- Visa Office-Referred Refugees (VOR) are referred by UNHCR or other designated referral agencies and identified by Canadian visa officers for participation in the program. The refugees' profiles are posted to a secure website where potential sponsors can view them and select families to support. Costs of resettlement and resettlement responsibilities are shared by Canada and private sponsors. There are two types of VOR sponsorships:
 - Visa Office-Referred (VOR) sponsorships, where private sponsors are responsible for full financial and settlement support during the sponsorship period;
 - Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) sponsorships, where the government and private sponsors share the financial costs of sponsorship but private sponsors are responsible for settlement support; and
- Joint Assistance Sponsorships (JAS) for government-assisted refugees with special needs (e.g. victims of trauma or torture, particular medical conditions, exceptionally large families), where the government provides full financial support throughout the sponsorship period, normally two years, and the private sponsor is responsible for providing settlement support.

Canada's refugee resettlement program and the unique role of private sponsors has proven to be a fruitful and lasting partnership that has provided protection to hundreds of thousands of refugees since its inception, and enriched the fabric of Canadian society through the successful settlement refugees. Canada's program has evolved considerably since it began and is just one example of how government and civil society can collaborate to provide protection to refugees and support their settlement in a new country. Through this Guidebook, the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative hopes Canada will serve as a strong example to other actors contemplating community sponsorship in their own countries. Canada's model is also not perfect and is continuously evolving as Canadians continue to learn. While

the hope is that the Canadian example inspires other actors to build new community sponsorship models, these new programs do not need to replicate what Canada has done and should be tailored to their own context.

B.3 CANADA'S PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP OF REFUGEES PROGRAM

Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program has been a vehicle for engaging Canadian communities to provide additional resettlement opportunities for refugees since it was established by the 1976 Immigration Act, which came into effect in 1978. The provisions allowing private sponsorship were quickly put to use in 1979, when more than 7,000 groups of Canadians mobilized to sponsor approximately 34,000 Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian refugees within just two years. In Ottawa alone, thousands of Canadians gathered at a public meeting to learn more about how they could help in the midst of the crisis unfolding in Asia. The City Council of Ottawa quickly approved funding to launch Project 4000, a non-governmental organization that provided resettlement assistance to sponsoring groups and sponsored refugees. Ottawa citizens sponsored approximately 2,000 refugees from Southeast Asia by 1983.

In 1986, the outpouring of energy and support by Canadians nationwide in response to the Indochinese refugee crisis earned the "people of Canada" the Nansen Medal, a United Nations award given for service to refugees. It is the only time an entire country's population has been given the award.

The PSR program's utility and flexibility were showcased in several time-sensitive resettlement initiatives. For example, Canada partnered with the Ismaili community to implement Project FOCUS Afghanistan to privately sponsor nearly 1,800 Afghan refugees from 1994 to 1998. In the Sierra Leone Blended Sponsorship Pilot, Canada provided four months of financial assistance while sponsoring groups provided the remaining eight. A similar three months/nine months ("3/9") blended program was created to privately sponsor Iraqi refugees. Similar programs were used to partner with the Anglican Primate in 2009 and the Rainbow Refugee Society to sponsor lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer refugees in 2011.

Following the widespread media attention on Alan Kurdi, the Syrian toddler whose body washed up on a Turkish beach in 2015, Canadians turned to the PSR program as a mechanism to provide safety to Syrians and Iraqis who were fleeing from violence and civil instability in their countries. In eighteen months, Canadians from over 400 communities nationwide committed to providing financial, emotional, and community support to approximately 18,000 Syrian refugees under the PSR program.

Since its creation, the PSR program has been used to resettle approximately 300,000 refugees in Canada who would have had no other durable solution. In addition, hundreds of communities across Canada have benefited by coming together to welcome privately sponsored refugees.

RESOURCES

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B.4 HOW IS THE SUCCESS OF COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP EVALUATED?

Evaluation in Canada is defined as the systematic collection and analysis of evidence on the outcomes of programs to make judgments about their relevance and performance, and the examination of alternative ways to deliver them or to achieve the same results. Canada evaluates its Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program in a number of ways.

Each year, Canada conducts an evaluation of its resettlement programs, including of the PSR program. This evaluation outlines, inter alia, key findings on the relevance, management, and performance of private sponsorship, as well as program costs, conclusions, and recommendations. Canada is also planning to conduct surveys to compare integration outcomes of newcomers who access settlement services and those who do not, across all immigration classes.

Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) (sponsoring groups with special agreements in place with Canada to undertake multiple sponsorships each year) are required to submit annual reports to Canada outlining the past year's sponsorship activities. These reports include information on sponsorship withdrawals and breakdowns, as well as a performance measure survey, where SAHs may express satisfaction and make recommendations to improve the private sponsorship model. Canada also uses an internal computing program called the Global Case Management System (GCMS) to record the processing of all private sponsorship applications. Through GCMS, Canada is able to collect quantifiable data such as the number of approved and refused sponsorship undertakings, eligibility decisions, permanent residence visas issued, refugees matched to sponsors under Visa Office-Referred programs, and refugee arrivals through the PSR program.

Canada also conducted a Rapid Impact Evaluation (RIE) to assess the early settlement outcomes for the Syrian refugees that arrived in Canada between 2015 and 2016, many of whom were privately sponsored. The RIE identified key outcomes of settlement integration and included a survey taken by Syrian participants on their settlement needs and whether they felt those needs were met by their sponsoring groups.

In addition, Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council has co-founded a number of academic studies on Canada's Syrian resettlement effort. Many of these projects are nearing completion in 2018.

RESOURCES

 IRCC, "Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs (GAR, PSR, BVOR, and RAP)"

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/resettlement.asp>

 IRCC, "Rapid Impact Evaluation of the Syrian Refugee Initiative"

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/rapid-syria.asp>

B.5 WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Exploring this Guidebook will give you a better understanding of the various components of a community sponsorship program, and its tremendous benefits not only to refugees in need of protection, but also to sponsors and communities as a whole.

1.C OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Overarching principles and policy issues have a direct impact on the design and ultimate operationalization of a community sponsorship program.

POLICYMAKERS MAY NEED TO CONSIDER:

- **PROTECTION:** Refugees often flee countries where their physical security is at risk and basic human rights are not upheld. International instruments such as the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention) and human rights treaties recognize that refugees are vulnerable and that their safety and well-being should be prioritized over other immigration imperatives. Making protection a purpose and outcome of community sponsorship requires programs to make no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religious belief, class, or political opinion, and to be ultimately guided by the protection needs of the refugees concerned. Canada explicitly recognizes protection as a cornerstone of its refugee policy, stating in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act that the main objective of its refugee program is protecting and saving the lives of displaced and persecuted people around the world. This language signals a prioritization of refugee protection over immigration imperatives such as refugees' ability to establish, meeting financial thresholds, and not posing a burden on Canada's health system.
- **DURABLE SOLUTIONS:** Finding durable solutions for refugees is a key principle of refugee policy. The ultimate goal of the international protection regime is finding protection and solutions for refugees that allow them to live their lives in dignity and peace. Resettlement is one of the several solutions facilitated by UNHCR, along with voluntary repatriation and local integration. However, according to UNHCR, there are only resettlement spots available for less than one percent of the more than twenty million refugees worldwide. These spots are prioritized for the most vulnerable – e.g. those with serious illnesses, children, women without adequate protection, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer refugees. Durable solutions aim to find permanent resolutions to refugee situations by offering refugees safety, security, and legal status to move on with their lives in a new country. Policymakers need to carefully consider the legal status provided to refugees once they are resettled through community sponsorship, with a view to ensuring that the quality of resettlement as a durable solution is preserved. For example, Canada ensures the refugees it resettles arrive as permanent residents with the right to move, work, and study freely anywhere in the country and be protected by Canadian law (see 2.C.1(i)).
- **INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY SHARING:** The Refugee Convention acknowledges that protecting refugees is an international responsibility. The Convention calls for international cooperation on refugee matters to manage the scope and humanitarian nature of refugee issues, alleviate burdens on certain countries, and avoid tension between states. Resettlement is a mechanism through which states can relieve pressure on countries of first asylum and engage in international cooperation by sharing the burdens and responsibilities of providing international protection. In Canada, community sponsorship of refugees presents an opportunity to participate in international responsibility sharing on refugee issues at a local level.
- **ADDITIONALITY/INCREASING RESETTLEMENT SPOTS:** Governments need to be mindful of the need to share the responsibility for refugee protection in an international context. According to UNHCR estimates, the number of refugees in need of resettlement greatly surpasses available global quotas. It is therefore important that private sponsorship programs are created in addition to existing government resettlement programs. The additionality principle can be described in several ways:

- In addition to government resettlement: Any refugee resettlement undertaken by communities or private entities should be in addition to government commitments. Otherwise stated, governments should not “off-load” their resettlement responsibilities on private actors. Community sponsorship, as a model of resettlement additional to government efforts, increases the number of global resettlement places offered through state programs. Allowing private sponsors to fill government resettlement spots, rather than adding to spots already committed to by government, may present risks, including an overall decline in global resettlement capacity at a time of unprecedented and urgent need.
- Adding resettlement spots globally: More refugees can be admitted in total if there is a cost/responsibility sharing for resettling refugees between communities and the government. In other words, the two sources of support work together as opposed to in two distinct streams whereby the government provides full support in the first and community sponsors undertake all financial and social responsibility for the sponsorship in the second. Further, the number of vulnerable refugees benefitting from resettlement can be significantly enhanced when community sponsorship programs are implemented in close collaboration with UNHCR to complement government resettlement programs.
- Adding to quality of resettlement: Involving communities in resettlement efforts leads to better and quicker integration outcomes for resettled refugees. Community sponsors provide individualized support in ways that government agencies are unable to, creating enhanced social and emotional support that is critical to making newcomers feel welcome and at home and engage more quickly in various sectors of society.
- **FAMILY REUNIFICATION:** Refugees resettle and integrate faster if they do not have to worry about family members they left behind. Family members also bolster the social supports available to refugees, smoothing the challenges of transitioning to life in a new country. Using community sponsorship to achieve family reunification rather than making use of other avenues may undermine the humanitarian intent of prioritizing the most vulnerable refugees for resettlement. This tension could be alleviated by offering alternative options for family reunification, such as Canada’s former Assisted Relative Class, which allowed families to sponsor extended family members to come to Canada. Canada offers an avenue for families to reunite with loved ones they left behind through its “One Year Window” of opportunity. Other options not yet explored by Canada can include refugee-specific family reunification programs with broader definitions of family and reduced financial and human capital requirements than regular family reunification programs. For more information see 2.D.5.
- **VOLUNTEERISM/COMMUNITY BUILDING:** Community sponsorship creates more welcoming communities. Through direct, personal interaction, sponsors develop meaningful and lasting relationships with the refugees they sponsor. Sponsors also learn about the experiences and challenges faced by refugees and often become advocates for acceptance and increased resettlement more generally. Community sponsorship is a true partnership between communities and the government and will only succeed if communities are empowered to act.
- **ONGOING PARTNERSHIP & ACCOUNTABILITY:** Successful public-private collaboration requires commitment and effort to maintain ongoing dialogue, an improvement and solutions orientation, and openness to change. It also requires transparency and a regular accountability mechanism. Canada invests in infrastructure designed to ensure ongoing communication with key members of the sponsorship community and also carries out performance measurement and program evaluation activities on a regular basis to improve program and policy integrity and efficacy.

RESOURCES



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1.D LEGAL FRAMEWORK

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

A community sponsorship program can only succeed if mobilized communities have access to a vehicle enabling them to act. Governments need to enact laws and regulations, and create policies and procedures, that permit communities to engage directly in resettling refugees.

Policymakers thinking about developing a community sponsorship program in their own countries will need to consider what sort of legal framework they will adopt to give effect to community involvement in refugee resettlement.

CANADA'S LEGAL CONTEXT

International Obligations

As a State party to the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention)*, Canada has made a commitment to work with international partners in resettling refugees, recognizing that refugee protection is a shared responsibility and that resettlement eases the strain on certain countries (e.g. those bordering states from which refugees arrive). Canada has implemented the legal obligations established by the *Refugee Convention* in its domestic law, giving it binding effect.

Federalism in Canada

The Canadian Constitution divides legislative powers between two orders of government: federal (matters of national interest) and provincial (matters of local interest). Section 95 of Canada's Constitution gives concurrent jurisdiction over immigration to the provincial and federal governments, although in practice the federal government is primarily responsible for selecting and processing refugees for resettlement to Canada. Federal law such as Canada's *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)* and *Citizenship Act* regulates right of entry into Canada, and legal status and rights of refugees upon entry. Canada has chosen to provide durable solutions to all refugees it resettles by granting them permanent resident status. Many aspects of refugee resettlement (e.g. access to services like education or health) fall to the provincial and territorial governments of Canada. Specific constitutional provisions apply to the Province of Quebec, which is responsible for selecting refugees to resettle to Quebec based on referrals from the Government of Canada.

Domestic Law

Canada has implemented its commitment under the *Refugee Convention* of responsibility sharing by resettling refugees in the *IRPA* and *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations (IRPR)*. The *IRPA* and *IRPR* also regulate other immigration avenues to Canada, including family sponsorship and various economic immigration categories. The commitment to resettle is explicitly set out in the *IRPA*, stating that an objective of the legislation is "to fulfill Canada's international obligations with respect to refugees and affirm Canada's commitment to international efforts to provide assistance to those in need of resettlement" (s. 3(2)(b)). Importantly, the Act emphasizes that the *IRPA* is first and foremost about "saving lives and offering protection to the displaced and persecuted" (s. 3(2)(a)). The *IRPA* is one piece in a complementary web of domestic laws which entrench important Canadian values, including Canada's Constitution, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Citizenship Act*, the *Multiculturalism Act*, the *Human Rights Act*, provincial Human Rights Codes, and the *Employment Equity Act*, to name a few.

CANADIAN LAWS REGARDING PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP OF REFUGEES

Who Can be Sponsored?

Canadian laws specify that in order to qualify for resettlement by Canada, refugees must either be referred to Canada by private sponsors, or by a referral organization like UNHCR (*IRPR* Regs. 139(1)(f), 140.3). This creates three central categories of refugees eligible for resettlement to Canada:

- **Government-Assisted Refugees:** Refugees referred for resettlement to Canada by UNHCR or another referral organization. Refugees resettled under this program are entirely supported by the Government of Canada during their first twelve months in Canada;
- **Privately Sponsored Refugees:** Refugees who are referred for resettlement to Canada by private sponsors – Canadian citizens or permanent residents. Under this stream, private sponsors provide financial support and settlement assistance during the refugees' first twelve months in Canada.
- **Visa Office-Referred Refugees:** Refugees who are referred to Canada by UNHCR and matched with Canadian private sponsors. Costs of resettlement are shared by Canada and private sponsors (see A.4(v)). There are two types of Visa Office-Referred sponsorships:
 - **Visa Office-Referred (VOR)** sponsorships where private sponsors are responsible for full financial and settlement support during the sponsorship period;
 - **Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR)** sponsorships where Canada and private sponsors share the financial costs of sponsorship but private sponsors are responsible for settlement support; and
- **Joint Assistance Sponsorships (JAS)** for government-assisted refugees with special needs (e.g. victims of trauma or torture, refugees with particular medical conditions, exceptionally large families) where Canada provides full financial support throughout the sponsorship period, normally two years, and private sponsors are responsible for providing settlement support.

Canadian laws also specify which individuals will qualify as “refugees” for the purpose of resettlement in Canada. These include Convention Refugees (refugees meeting the definition of the *Refugee Convention*) and persons in similar circumstances, “taking into account Canada’s humanitarian tradition with respect to the displaced and persecuted” (*IRPA* s. 12(3)). Canada has created a class called the “Country of Asylum Class” to further define who may qualify as “persons in similar circumstances.” For more information, see 2.A.1(iii).

Who Can Sponsor?

Canadian laws also set out the legal framework for who is eligible to sponsor. The *IRPA* provides that “[a] Canadian citizen or permanent resident, or a group of Canadian citizens or permanent residents, a corporation incorporated under a law of Canada or of a province or an unincorporated organization or association under federal or provincial law – or any combination of them – may sponsor a foreign national, subject to the regulations” (*IRPA* s. 13).

The laws further specify that an eligible sponsoring group must have five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents, each over eighteen years old, who are acting together for the purpose of sponsoring a refugee (*IRPR* Reg. 138). For more information about types of sponsoring groups see 2.B.3(ii).

RESOURCES

 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees
<http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10>

 Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-4.html>

 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-2.5/>

 Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/sor-2002-227/>

2.A REFUGEES: FROM ELIGIBILITY TO ARRIVAL

ACTORS MAY CONSIDER:

A.1 Who is Eligible to be sponsored?

A.2 What resources and partnerships are required to process privately sponsored refugees?

A.3 What information and resources are provided to refugees prior to their arrival in their resettlement country?

A.4 How are sponsorship-eligible refugees identified?

A.5 How are sponsors and refugees in contact pre-arrival?

A.6 How are refugees screened?

A.7 How does overseas processing by UNHCR work?

A.8 How are refugees transported and how are destinations chosen?

A.1 WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO BE SPONSORED?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider who qualifies for resettlement under a community sponsorship of refugees program.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What criteria must applicants generally meet to be eligible for refugee resettlement?
- (ii) How is “refugee” interpreted under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees?
- (iii) Are there any other criteria outside those established in the Refugee Convention that will make individuals eligible to be privately sponsored?
- (iv) Where do refugees need to be physically located in order to be eligible for sponsorship?
- (v) Must individuals in a family independently meet the eligibility criteria for refugee resettlement or is status derivative?
- (vi) What other defining criteria may be used to determine refugees’ eligibility for community sponsorship?

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, “Guide 6000 – Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/E16000TOC.asp>
-  RSTP, “Who Can Be Sponsored?”
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/groups-of-five/4-who-can-be-sponsored/>
-  Michael Casasola, “The Indochinese Refugee Movement and the Subsequent Evolution of UNHCR and Canadian Resettlement Selection Policies and Practices” (Refuge, 2016)
<http://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/40270/36409>
-  RSTP, “Are you eligible for private sponsorship to Canada?”
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugees/are-you-eligible-for-private-sponsorship-to-canada/>
-  RSTP Handbook for Sponsoring Groups, “Chapter 3: Who Can be Sponsored?”
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Chapter-3-Who-Can-Be-Sponsored.pdf>
-  IRCC, “Resettlement: Eligibility”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/eligibility/index.asp>
-  Robert C. Batarseh, “Inside/Outside the Circle: From the Indochinese Designated Class to Contemporary Group Processing” (Refuge, 2016)
<https://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/40254>

- IRCC, “OP 5 – Overseas Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op05-eng.pdf>

(i) WHAT CRITERIA MUST APPLICANTS GENERALLY MEET TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada's system has two main steps for determining who it will resettle as refugees. The first is determining the eligibility of applicants, meaning that they meet the definition under 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention)* or Canada's own definition of "refugee". The second is admissibility to Canada. Applicants will undergo a security, criminality, and medical screening to ensure they do not pose a risk to Canadian public safety. Refugee applicants will qualify for resettlement to Canada if:

- They are members of the Convention Refugee Abroad Class (see 2.A.1(ii)) or members of the Country of Asylum Class (see 2.A.1(iii)).
- Their refugee claim is credible (see 2.A.1(vi)).
- They can demonstrate the ability to establish themselves in Canada (see 2.A.1(vi)) (not applicable for applicants requiring urgent protection or considered vulnerable).
- They have no durable solution within a reasonable period of time other than resettlement to Canada (see 2.A.1(vi)).
- They are not inadmissible on medical or security grounds (see 2.A.6).

DETAIL

The eligibility decision is normally based on an interview by a Canadian visa officer with the refugee applicant, an assessment of supporting documentation submitted by the applicant and sponsoring group, and additional information available to the officer, such as country condition research.

Refugees will be assessed on their ability to establish themselves successfully in Canada. It is very rare that Canada refuses to resettle refugees for lack of ability to establish, since the focus of the country's refugee program is humanitarianism and saving lives. In making this assessment, the visa officer will consider whether refugees have relatives or a sponsor in Canada, the ability to speak or learn to speak English or French, and the potential for employment and resourcefulness. When a family unit is applying, the settlement potential of all family members is assessed as a single determination. Refugees deemed by the visa officer to be in urgent need of protection or in vulnerable circumstances do not need to demonstrate their ability to establish in Canada.

For some sponsorship streams (Group of Five, Community Sponsor – see 2.B.3(ii)), refugees must also possess valid proof of refugee status from UNHCR or their host state in order to qualify for resettlement. This requirement limits access to available sponsorship avenues for many refugees but was introduced by Canada to improve the quality of applications and ease pressures on processing.

To be accepted for resettlement in Canada, refugees must not be inadmissible on security, criminality, or medical grounds (see 2.A.6). Refugees will not be inadmissible for posing an undue burden on Canada's medical system; medical inadmissibility only applies in cases where refugees have health conditions that pose a danger to the Canadian public (i.e. active tuberculosis and untreated syphilis). Canada will require refugees to be treated for such conditions before being admitted.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Guide 6000 – Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/E16000TOC.asp>

-  IRCC, "Resettlement: Eligibility"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/eligibility/index.asp>

-  IRCC, "Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/index.asp>

(ii) HOW IS “REFUGEE” INTERPRETED UNDER THE 1951 CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

In determining whether an applicant is a refugee in need of resettlement, Canada applies the Convention Refugee definition found in the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention)*. The *Refugee Convention* describes refugees as people who are outside their home country or the country where they normally live, and who are unwilling or unable to return because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group, such as women or people of a particular sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

DETAIL

Refugee applicants must establish that they meet the following criteria of the *Refugee Convention*:

- They are outside each of their countries of nationality or, if they are stateless, they are outside their country of former habitual residence;
- They fear persecution;
- Their risk of persecution is well-founded, that is, the likelihood of the persecution feared is more than a mere possibility;
- The persecution feared is tied to at least one of the five following grounds: race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group;
- They are unable or, owing to their fear, unwilling to seek protection from their state;
- There is no reasonable internal flight alternative (also called “internal relocation alternative”) available to them; and
- They are not excluded under Article 1(D), 1(E), or 1(F) of the *Refugee Convention*.

RESOURCES

- 🏛️ UNHCR, “Handbook and Guidelines on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status under the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees”
<http://www.unhcr.org/3d58e13b4.pdf>
- 🌐 Government of Canada, “Terms and Definitions Related to Refugee Protection”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/definitions.asp>
- 🌐 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, “Interpretation of the Convention Refugee Definition in the Case Law”
<http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/Eng/BoaCom/references/LegJur/Pages/RefDef.aspx>
- 🌐 UNHCR, “Note on the Exclusion Clauses”
<http://www.unhcr.org/excom/standcom/3ae68cf68/note-exclusion-clauses.html>

(iii) ARE THERE ANY OTHER CRITERIA OUTSIDE THOSE ESTABLISHED IN THE REFUGEE CONVENTION THAT WILL MAKE INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE TO BE PRIVATELY SPONSORED?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

As the private sponsorship of refugees program has evolved, Canada has created various humanitarian classes to broaden the strict refugee eligibility criteria set out in the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and enable a wider array of individuals in “refugee-like” situations to be eligible for resettlement. Designated humanitarian classes also permit Canada to respond in a targeted way to particular conflict situations.

DETAIL

COUNTRY OF ASYLUM CLASS allows the resettlement of refugees who:

- Have been, and continue to be, seriously and personally affected by civil war, armed conflict or massive violations of human rights;
- Are outside of their countries of nationality and habitual residence; and
- Have no reasonable prospect, within a reasonable period, or another durable solution, namely: voluntary repatriation or resettlement in their country of nationality or habitual residence; resettlement in their country of asylum; or resettlement to a third country.

“Seriously and personally affected” means that the refugee applicant has been, and continues to be, personally subjected to sustained and effective denial of a basic human right. Human rights are defined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*.

PRIMA FACIE STATUS: Canada has also granted refugee status and resettlement to certain populations recognized as refugees on a prima facie basis UNHCR. Examples include Somali Madhiban refugees in Kenya in 2003-04, Karen refugees in Thailand in 2006-08, and Bhutanese refugees in Nepal (2008-2015).

Canada has also created the following humanitarian classes which are no longer in effect:

- POLITICAL PRISONERS AND OPPRESSED PERSONS CLASS for individuals located within designated countries (Poland, Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Uruguay, Guatemala) who were persecuted by way of detention or other penal control for legitimately exercising freedom of thought or expression;
- EAST EUROPEAN SELF-EXILED PERSONS CLASS: Thousands of European (in particular Polish) self-exiled persons were sponsored in the 1980s in a program parallel to the Government-Assisted program.
- INDOCHINESE REFUGEES: Out of approximately 60,000 Indochinese refugees resettled to Canada in 1979 and 1980, 34,000 were privately sponsored.
- SOURCE COUNTRY CLASS: Allowed for resettlement of individuals facing recurring human rights violations directly from their countries of origin where Canada specifically designated those countries.

RESOURCES

-  Barbara Treviranus and Michael Casasola, "Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program: A Practitioner's Perspective of its Past and Future" (Journal of International Migration and Integration, 2003)
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12134-003-1032-0>

-  David Matas, "Political Prisoners and Oppressed Persons Class and the Soviet Union" (Refuge, 1991)
<http://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/21614>

-  James Hathaway, "Selective Concern: An Overview of Refugee Law in Canada" (McGill Law Journal, 1988)
<http://lawjournal.mcgill.ca/userfiles/other/8290193-hathaway.pdf>

-  Shauna Labman, "Private Sponsorship: Complementary or Conflicting Interests?" (Refuge, 2016)
<http://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/40266/36411>

-  IRCC, "Backgrounder – Group resettlement to Canada: Karen refugees in Mae La Oon Camp, Thailand"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/backgrounders/2006/2006-06-20.asp>

(iv) WHERE DO REFUGEES NEED TO BE PHYSICALLY LOCATED IN ORDER TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SPONSORSHIP?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada only selects persons for resettlement from **countries of asylum**, meaning that to qualify for the private sponsorship of refugees program, refugees must have fled their country of origin and be residing in another country other than Canada where they have sought protection. Refugees must also meet the other eligibility criteria for private sponsorship (see 2.A.1(i)).

DETAIL

In exceptional cases, Canada may resettle refugees who are still residing in their countries of origin. One example is Canada's recent resettlement of 1,200 Yazidi women from both inside and outside of Iraq.

Refugees cannot apply directly for resettlement to Canada from countries of asylum. They must be referred by:

- UNHCR; or
- a designated referral organization; or
- a Canadian private sponsoring group.

Refugees already in Canada will not qualify for private sponsorship. If refugees have been legally, economically, and socially integrated in their host country or availed themselves of the protection of the host government, or have been offered resettlement in another country, they will also not qualify for resettlement to Canada. They will also be ineligible if they are able to voluntarily return to safety and dignity to their country of origin and re-avail themselves of national protection.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Guide 6000 – Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/E16000TOC.asp>
-  RSTP Handbook for Sponsoring Groups, "Chapter 3: Who Can be Sponsored?"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Chapter-3-Who-Can-Be-Sponsored.pdf>
-  IRCC, Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/ref-sponsor.pdf>
-  IRCC, "Determining eligibility: Ensuring the applicant does not have another durable solution"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/eligibility/durable.asp>

(v) MUST INDIVIDUALS IN A FAMILY INDEPENDENTLY MEET THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OR IS STATUS DERIVATIVE?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Family unity is a fundamental principle of refugee protection. Family members are often separated when they flee their countries of origin. Respecting family unity requires granting refugee status to the spouse and dependants of a refugee, or conferring derivative refugee status. Individuals who are granted derivative refugee status enjoy the same rights and entitlements as other recognized refugees. Family units are resettled together wherever possible.

DETAIL

Canadian law allows “family members” to resettle to Canada with the principal refugee applicant. Canada defines “family members” as spouses or common law partners, dependent children, and children of dependent children. However, all family members must pass security, criminality, and medical checks (see 2.A.6). If an accompanying family member is found to be inadmissible to Canada (see 2.A.6), the entire family will be inadmissible to Canada (some exceptions apply).

Visa officers may opt to determine that individuals who do not meet the definition of “family members” are nevertheless *de facto* dependants of the primary refugee applicant based on their economic and emotional dependency, and should be resettled as part of the family unit.

Canada endeavors to process entire families concurrently to avoid situations of family separation. However, if a family member is separated, he/she may submit an application for permanent residence within one year of the principal applicant's arrival in Canada through the One Year Window process.

In situations where a minor child is considered for resettlement with only one parent and the other parent is alive and can be located, the non-accompanying parent must either provide consent for the minor child to resettle, or the accompanying parent must have a court order granting him/her full custody while relinquishing the visitation rights of the non-accompanying parent.

Unaccompanied minors, defined as children who have no adult who is capable and willing to care for them abroad or in Canada, are generally excluded from resettlement to Canada unless they meet one of two exceptions: (a) they have a guardian where a *de facto* dependency relationship exists and the guardian is also being sponsored; and (b) they have family in Canada. In the latter case, Canada will only resettle the minor if it is determined it is in the minor's “best interests.”

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, “OP 5 – Overseas Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op05-eng.pdf>
-  IRCC, “Determining which family members are eligible for resettlement”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/eligibility/family.asp>

-  IRCC, "OP1 – Procedures"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op01-eng.pdf>

-  IRCC, "Procedure: One-year window of opportunity provision (OYW)"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/processing/OYW.asp>

-  IRCC, "Request to process family members under the one-year window of opportunity provisions"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/fam-follow.asp>

(vi) WHAT OTHER DEFINING CRITERIA MAY BE USED TO DETERMINE REFUGEES' ELIGIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

In addition to having to meet the Convention Refugee or Country of Asylum Class definition (see 2.A.1(ii) and 2.A.1(iii)), refugee applicants must show their claims are credible, that they have the ability to establish in Canada, that they have no other durable solution in another country, and that they are not otherwise inadmissible to Canada for security or medical reasons (see 2.A.6). In addition, for some sponsorship streams, Canada requires individuals to be recognized by UNHCR or their host state as refugees.

DETAIL

ASSESSING CREDIBILITY: Convention Refugee applicants must establish the facts underlying their claim of persecution on a balance of probabilities, but need only show there is a reasonable chance they would face persecution in the future.

ABILITY TO ESTABLISH: Visa officers will determine whether refugee applicants will be able to provide for themselves and their dependents and do not have any impediments to joining the full time labour force, even if it is at minimum wage. In making this assessment, the officer will consider whether the refugees have relatives or sponsors in Canada, the ability to speak or learn to speak English or French, the potential for employment, and resourcefulness. In practice, very few refugee applicants are refused resettlement to Canada based on lack of ability to establish.

DURABLE SOLUTION: The Canadian visa officer must be satisfied that there is no reasonable prospect, within a reasonable period of time, for refugee applicants to obtain another durable solution. There are three possible durable solutions according to Canadian procedures: voluntary repatriation to the applicant's home country; local integration into the refugee's country of asylum; and resettlement in a country other than Canada.

ADMISSIBILITY: Once eligibility criteria are met, refugee applicants must undergo security, criminality, and medical admissibility screening. Refugee applicant will not be allowed to come to Canada if it is determined they are a security or public health threat. For more information, see module 2.A.6.

REFUGEE STATUS RECOGNITION DOCUMENT: For some streams of Canadian sponsorship, the Government of Canada requires individuals to possess valid proof of refugee status from UNHCR or their host state in order to be eligible for sponsorship.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/ref-sponsor.pdf>
-  IRCC, "Determining eligibility: Ensuring the applicant does not have another durable solution"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/eligibility/durable.asp>
-  IRCC, "Determining eligibility: Assessing credibility"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/eligibility/credibility.asp>

- IRCC, "Determining eligibility: Determining whether the applicant has the ability to establish"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/eligibility/establish.asp>

A.2 WHAT RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS ARE REQUIRED TO PROCESS PRIVATELY SPONSORED REFUGEES?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider the resources and partnerships necessary to process all aspects of private sponsorship – from registration/application, to assessing eligibility, to screening, to transportation and arrival.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What steps are required to process a privately sponsored refugee?
- (ii) Where is each processing step completed?
- (iii) If refugees are referred by an organization, what processing steps does the referral organization undertake, and what steps are the responsibility of the resettlement country?
- (iv) If refugees are named by sponsors, which actor(s) is/are responsible for which processing step?
- (v) How do various processing actors communicate their actions and decisions?
- (vi) What is the role of the host country in processing refugees for sponsorship/resettlement?
- (vii) What policies govern data-sharing between actors?

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, “OP 5 – Overseas Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op05-eng.pdf>
-  Canadian Security Intelligence Service, “The Security Screening Program”
<https://www.csis.gc.ca/srtrscrng/index-en.php>
-  Canada Border Services Agency, “Security screening”
<http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/security-secureite/screen-verific-eng.html>
-  “Here’s how refugees are screened before arriving in Canada” (Global News, 19 November 2015)
<http://globalnews.ca/news/2349421/heres-how-refugees-are-screened-before-arriving-in-canada/>
-  Marina Jimenez, “Syrian refugees will face three levels of intense screening” (The Star, 18 November 2015)
<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/11/18/syrian-refugees-will-face-three-levels-of-intense-screening.html>

-  Stephanie Levitz, "Social media a vital lifeline for Canada's Syrian Refugees: report" (Global News, 21 April 2017)
<http://globalnews.ca/news/3395784/syrian-refugees-canada-report/>

-  RSTP, "Centralized Processing of Refugee Sponsorship Applications"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/latest-policy-program-update/centralization-of-processing-of-refugee-sponsorship-applications/>

-  IRCC, "Departmental Performance Report"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/dpr/2016/dpr.asp>

-  RSTP, "Chapter 6: The Sponsorship Process"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Chapter-6-The-Sponsorship-Process.pdf>

-  RSTP, "Fact Sheet: The Sponsorship Application Process"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Sponsorship-Application-Process-Fact-Sheet-1.pdf>

-  RSTP, "Interview Preparation"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Interview-Preparation-Fact-Sheet-1.pdf>

-  RSTP, "Visa Office-Referred Sponsorships"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/special-initiatives/visa-office-referred-sponsorships/>

-  RSTP, "Guidelines on Sponsorship of Refugees out of Turkey"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/latest-policy-program-update/guidelines-turkey/>

-  Joe Friesen, "Refugee sponsorship can be a long, complex process – here's how it works" (The Globe and Mail, 10 September 2015)
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/refugee-sponsorship-can-be-a-long-complex-process---heres-how-it-works/article26323043/>

-  RSTP, "Exit permits for refugees in Uganda"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/latest-policy-program-update/exit-permits-uganda/>

(i) WHAT STEPS ARE REQUIRED TO PROCESS A PRIVATELY SPONSORED REFUGEE?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The main steps required to process a privately sponsored refugee include:

- Identifying a refugee case;
- Assessing the sponsor's eligibility to sponsor (see 2.B.3);
- Assessing the refugee applicant's eligibility to be granted refugee protection by Canada (see 2.A.1);
- Interviewing and collecting biometric information to determine the refugee's admissibility to Canada, including medical, criminality, and security screening (see 2.A.6);
- Issuing a visa to travel to Canada;
- Coordinating travel, including arranging for travel documentation, exit permits, and all flight logistics (typically in partnership with the International Organization for Migration) (see 2.A.8); and
- Notifying sponsors of the refugee(s)' arrival date and time (see 2.B.6(ii)).

DETAIL

Private sponsoring groups in Canada may identify refugees they would like to sponsor by either (a) specifically naming the refugee (often a family member or acquaintance of a Canadian resident who may or may not be a member of the sponsoring group); or (b) by selecting a refugee from a list supplied by Canada. In the latter case, the refugee is referred to a Canadian mission overseas by UNHCR or another partner agency and is subsequently selected to be resettled to Canada either through the Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) program or through private sponsorship through one of three program streams:

- **Visa Office-Referred (VOR) sponsorship** where the private sponsor is responsible for both the financial and settlement support of the refugees;
- **Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) sponsorship**, where Canada and the private sponsor share the financial costs of resettlement and the private sponsor is responsible for providing settlement support; or
- **Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)** where the government is responsible for all the financial support (normally for two years) and the private sponsor is responsible for all the social and settlement support of the government-assisted refugee.

When assessing the refugee's eligibility to be granted protection by Canada, the visa officer considers three main factors: (1) The applicant is a refugee in need of protection under the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* or a person in similar circumstances as defined in Canadian legislation; (2) The applicant's refugee claim is credible; and (3) The applicant has no durable solution within a reasonable period of time other than resettlement to Canada. For more information on refugee eligibility, see 2.A.1)

When determining admissibility, officers must assess the following elements: (1) Health (i.e. does the refugee pose a threat to public health or safety); (2) Criminality; and (3) Security. For more information see 2.A.6.

RESOURCES

 Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/sor-2002-227/>

 IRCC, “OP 5 – Overseas Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op05-eng.pdf>

(ii) WHERE IS EACH PROCESSING STEP COMPLETED?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Processing of refugee sponsorship applications occurs both in Canada and overseas, depending on the processing step.

DETAIL

IDENTIFICATION OF A REFUGEE CASE may be completed in Canada or overseas. If sponsors already know whom they wish to sponsor, identification occurs in Canada. If sponsors seek to identify individuals to sponsor, identification may occur overseas, often through referral by a third-party organization like UNHCR.

ASSESSMENT OF THE SPONSOR'S ELIGIBILITY is completed by officers in a centralized processing office in Canada, called the "Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa" (ROC-O) This processing is done in Canada because it may require contact with sponsors and it does not require contact with individuals or organizations overseas.

INTERVIEW TO ASSESS THE REFUGEE APPLICANT'S ELIGIBILITY TO BE GRANTED PROTECTION IN CANADA occurs overseas where possible at the closest visa office to the refugee applicant.

INTERVIEW AND COLLECTION OF BIOMETRIC INFORMATION TO DETERMINE THE REFUGEE'S ADMISSIBILITY TO BECOME A PERMANENT RESIDENT occurs at locations overseas where possible; if additional information is required from screening partners, the case may be referred to offices in Canada to complete additional screening. For more information, see 2.A.6.

TRAVEL COORDINATION, including arranging travel documentation and all flight logistics is performed at overseas visa and International Organization for Migration (IOM) offices once a final decision has been reached. Refugees may need to obtain exit permits from their host State.

NOTIFYING SPONSORS of the refugee(s)' arrival happens both at the overseas visa office and in Canada. The overseas visa office sends a Notification of Arrival Transmission to ROC-O, which in turn notifies the sponsors of the details of arrival.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "OP 5 – Overseas Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op05-eng.pdf>
-  Operational Bulletin 63 – March 21, 2017, "Implementation of the Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/bulletins/2017/ob638.asp>
-  IRCC, "Visa offices outside Canada: Countries/Territories and corresponding Canadian visa offices"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/offices/apply-where.asp>
-  IRCC, "Destining and travel arrangements"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/processing/travel/index.asp>

(iii) IF REFUGEES ARE REFERRED BY AN ORGANIZATION, WHAT PROCESSING STEPS DOES THE REFERRAL ORGANIZATION UNDERTAKE, AND WHAT STEPS ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RESETTLEMENT COUNTRY?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada accepts referrals from UNHCR or a referral organization with whom the government has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Referral organizations identify refugees suitable for referral to Canada's resettlement program, including private sponsorship. Generally, Canada will:

- **Assess the sponsor's eligibility;**
- Conduct an interview to **assess the refugee applicant's eligibility** to be granted protection by Canada;
- Conduct an interview and collect biometric information to **determine the refugee's admissibility** to become a permanent resident, including medical, criminality, and security assessments;
- **Issue a visa** to refugees approved for resettlement to Canada; and
- **Coordinate refugees' travel** including arranging travel documentation, exit permits, and all flight logistics, typically in partnership with the International Organization for Migration.

DETAIL

In 1950 the United Nations General Assembly mandated UNHCR to provide international protection to refugees and to seek solutions for their situations by assisting governments to provide durable solutions to refugees, including resettlement. UNHCR works to identify refugees in need of resettlement. It produces a Projected Global Resettlement Needs document each year to assist in strategizing with governments and other partners on responding to current needs. Canada is an important supporter of UNHCR's protection and solutions mandate and engages with UNHCR regularly around its resettlement programs.

To enter into a MOU with an organization for the purpose of providing referrals, the organization must demonstrate:

- A working knowledge of the provisions of Canada's *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* relating to protection criteria; and
- An ability abroad to locate and identify Convention refugees and persons in similar circumstances.

The referral organization will usually provide the visa office with a referral form containing the refugee claim, family composition, and other important information.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs (GAR, PSR, BVOR, and RAP)"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/resettlement.asp>

-  IRCC, "OP 5 – Overseas Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op05-eng.pdf>

-  IRCC, "Intake: Referrals from the UNHCR"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/intake/unhcr.asp>

-  IRCC, "Procedural fairness and determining eligibility based on paper screening"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/eligibility/paper.asp>

-  UNHCR, "Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2018"
<http://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/593a88f27/unhcr-projected-global-resettlement-needs-2018.html>

(iv) IF REFUGEES ARE NAMED BY SPONSORS, WHICH ACTOR(S) IS/ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR WHICH PROCESSING STEP?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada's refugee system allows sponsoring groups to identify refugees they wish to sponsor to come to Canada. Generally, Canada will:

- Conduct background checks of the sponsors and assess their ability to provide income and settlement support to the sponsored refugees;
- Conduct an interview to assess the refugee applicant's eligibility to be granted protection. In some cases where applicants have already been determined to be Convention Refugees by UNHCR or their host government, Canada may follow that determination without conducting an in-person interview;
- Conduct an interview and collect biometric information to determine the refugee's admissibility to become a permanent resident, including medical, criminal and security assessments;
- Issue a visa to all refugees resettled to Canada; and
- Coordinate refugees' travel including arranging for travel documentation, exit permits, and all flight logistics (typically in partnership with the International Organization for Migration and the host State).

DETAIL

A sponsoring group may submit an application for any individual it believes is eligible to be granted protection by Canada and who is admissible to become a permanent resident of Canada. Prior to submitting a sponsorship application and based on available information, the sponsor will make a preliminary assessment as to whether the applicant may meet the refugee eligibility criteria. For example, refugees need to have appropriate documentation if being sponsored by a Group of Five or Community Sponsor group (see 2.B.3(ii)). Refugees must also be outside of their country of origin in order to be eligible for sponsorship.

In addition to the refugee application, sponsors are responsible for completing a separate application to show the government they have financial and settlement capacity to sponsor the refugee(s) they have identified. Before processing the refugee applications overseas, Canada assesses sponsors' eligibility and capacity to sponsor at the Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa.

Canada allows three main types of groups to sponsor refugees: (1) Sponsorship Agreement Holders and their Constituent Groups and/or Co-Sponsors; (2) Groups of Five; and (3) Community Sponsors. For more information see 2.B.3(ii).

RESOURCES

 IRCC, "OP 5 – Overseas Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op05-eng.pdf>

 IRCC, "Procedural fairness and determining eligibility based on paper screening"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/eligibility/paper.asp>

 IRCC, "Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Application Guide (IMM 5413)
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/5413ETOC.asp>

 RSTP, "Handbook for Sponsoring Groups"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/hand-book-for-sponsoring-groups/>

(v) HOW DO VARIOUS PROCESSING ACTORS COMMUNICATE THEIR ACTIONS AND DECISIONS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Effective communication between processing actors as well as sponsors and refugees is essential to successful private sponsorship and refugee resettlement to Canada. Processing actors communicate their actions and decisions through centralized points of contact in their organizations, which may include generic mailboxes, direct person-to-person contact, and information databases.

Typically, standardized forms are used to facilitate communications between actors to ensure that all necessary and expected information is conveyed and easily understood.

DETAIL

Examples of communications tools used by processing actors include:

DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS via email, telephone, or occurring in-person.

GENERIC MAILBOXES can be used by members of a team working at different times or in different locations to save information in a central location. Generally, refugees and sponsors will submit enquiries through a generic mailbox and the enquiry will be forwarded to the appropriate office within the Government of Canada.

INFORMATION DATABASES: The Government of Canada uses an internal database called the **Global Case Management System** (GCMS) to assist in processing applications. Information collected in the GCMS includes client identification (i.e., name, gender, date of birth, country of birth, etc.); contact information and history; education; and employment history. Visa officers also record their notes from refugee interviews and their reasons behind their ultimate decision to either approve or refuse a refugee for resettlement. Results of refugee medical examinations are also recorded in GCMS. Through GCMS, a visa officer can access case information collected by another officer working at a different location.

STANDARDIZED FORMS include:

- The Resettlement Registration Form issued by UNHCR; or
- Canada's Notification of Arrival Form.

Visa officers sometimes also receive **REPORTS ON CRIMINALITY/SECURITY SCREENING** from security partners (see 2.A.6)

RESOURCES

 IRCC, "Privacy Impact Assessment Summary – Global Case Management System (GCMS) – Phase II"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/atip/pia/global-phase2.asp>

 IRCC, "Communicating with applicants and sponsors"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/communication.asp>

(vi) WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE HOST COUNTRY IN PROCESSING REFUGEES FOR SPONSORSHIP/RESETTLEMENT?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The host country plays an important role in processing refugees for resettlement through private sponsorship. Host countries' roles include: facilitating exit permits, registering asylum seekers, in some cases conducting refugee status determination and referring cases to UNHCR, and enabling Canadian visa officers to operate on their territories.

DETAIL

The host country plays an important role in processing refugees for resettlement through private sponsorship. For example, some host countries require refugees to obtain exit permits and related documentation to enable refugee travel to Canada.

In addition, host countries may require that refugees and asylum-seekers register with their government or UNHCR when they arrive on their territory.

Some host countries conduct their own refugee status determination, and may bring cases to the attention of UNHCR. UNHCR in turn determines their suitability for resettlement and ultimate referral to Canada.

Host countries also play an important facilitation and enabling role in permitting Canadian visa officers to operate on their territories, supporting the establishment of new visa offices, and organizing logistics/transportation to enable visa officers to conduct in-person interviews with refugees.

These roles require coordination between local visa offices, UNHCR, International Organization for Migration, and the host country.

RESOURCES

- RSTP, "Summary of refugee registration and refugee status determination by Country of Asylum"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/RSDs-by-country-updated-January-2017Final.pdf>
- International Organization for Migration, "Resettlement Assistance"
<http://eea.iom.int/index.php/what-we-do/resettlement>

(vii) WHAT POLICIES GOVERN DATA-SHARING BETWEEN ACTORS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada enters into agreements, arrangements, or contracts with other processing actors. These agreements govern all aspects of the activities carried out by those actors, including their roles and responsibilities with respect to the collection, use, disclosure, and sharing of personal information with third parties.

It is paramount that all actors ensure the personal information of refugees is protected and is not used or disclosed in a manner that would place them or their family members at risk of harm.

Canada's policy on the use of personal information requires government departments to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment before establishing any new or substantially modified program or activity involving personal information. The Privacy Impact Assessment will identify any risks that may impact a person's privacy and measures to mitigate those risks.

DETAIL

PERSONAL INFORMATION: Personal information includes information that can be combined with other information to identify a specific individual, even through association or inference. Such information could potentially place a refugee at risk of harm if it is used incorrectly or disclosed to a third party. For example, if information such as ethnic origin were linked to health information and only one person in a small town was of that ethnic origin, this could potentially make that individual identifiable and reveal sensitive health information about that person.

PRIVACY POLICIES: Privacy protection should be a core consideration in the initial framing and subsequent administration of programs and activities involving personal information. Individuals are increasingly sensitive to the complexity of modern information systems, how information travels through those systems, and want to be assured that their personal information is protected. Failure to guard against privacy breaches and improper disclosure of information could result in potentially grave consequences for affected individuals and undermine the integrity of programs.

INFORMATION-SHARING AGREEMENTS: Entering into signed agreements, arrangements or contracts with partners also ensures there is shared understanding of the importance of protecting personal information and affords an opportunity to address those principles in writing and how they will be implemented.

RESOURCES

-  Government of Canada, "Guidance on Preparing Information Sharing Agreements Involving Personal Information"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/access-information-privacy/privacy/guidance-preparing-information-sharing-agreements-involving-personal-information.html>
-  Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, "Privacy Impact Assessments: Frequently asked questions"
https://www.priv.gc.ca/en/privacy-topics/privacy-impact-assessments/02_05_d_33/
-  Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, "Overview of privacy legislation in Canada"
https://www.priv.gc.ca/en/privacy-topics/privacy-laws-in-canada/02_05_d_15/

 Government of Canada, "Directive on Privacy Impact Assessment"

<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=18308>

 IRCC, "Agreements"

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/laws-policy/agree.asp>

 IRCC, "International use of biometrics"

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/biometrics-international.asp>

A.3 WHAT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES ARE PROVIDED TO REFUGEES PRIOR TO THEIR ARRIVAL IN THEIR RESETTLEMENT COUNTRY?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider how to help refugees prepare for and adjust to a new life in their resettlement country.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) How do refugees learn about what to expect in their country of resettlement?
- (ii) What should refugees expect when they arrive in their country of resettlement?
- (iii) What can refugees learn in advance to prepare themselves for life in a new country?
- (iv) How is pre-departure information provided to refugees prior to arrival in their resettlement country?
- (v) How do refugees learn about the role of their sponsors in their resettlement?

RESOURCES

-  IOM, "Canadian Orientation Abroad"
<http://www.coa-oce.ca/>
-  IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>
-  RSTP, "Managing Expectations: A Resource Kit for Refugee Sponsors"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/expectool2013.pdf>
-  RSTP, "What to expect"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugees/what-to-expect/>
-  IOM, "Canadian Orientation Abroad: A Pre-departure orientation Project implemented by the International Organization for Migration"
<http://p2pcanada.ca/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2015/01/Joanie-Durocher.pdf>
-  Settlement News Across the Province, "Orientation Sessions for Future Newcomers to Canada"
http://atwork.settlement.org/downloads/atwork/SNAP_Summer_2005.pdf

(i) HOW DO REFUGEES LEARN ABOUT WHAT TO EXPECT IN THEIR COUNTRY OF RESETTLEMENT?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

It is important that refugees are able to learn about the differences, challenges, and opportunities they will encounter in their country of resettlement. Refugees can access information about resettlement to Canada from a number of sources, including:

- The International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides pre-departure orientation workshops for refugees resettling to Canada;
- UNHCR provides information during counselling sessions and individual encounters with refugees regarding life in Canada. The UNHCR Resettlement Handbook chapter on Canada also provides publicly accessible information about the resettlement process in Canada;
- Sponsoring groups can provide helpful information about the community they will resettle in; and
- The Government of Canada's website contains information about various services refugees will be able to access once in Canada.

DETAIL

It is important that refugees are able to learn about the differences, challenges, and opportunities they will meet in their country of resettlement. The IOM provides pre-departure orientation workshops for refugees resettling in Canada through its "Canadian Orientation Abroad" program. The workshops cover many subjects such as refugees' rights and status; the kind of support they can expect from the host government; the social, cultural, and economic make-up of Canada; local laws; safety; health; education; housing; language courses; and more. IOM will also provide information about the destination community where possible/available. This orientation is very important for resettled refugees as many may have little, if any, knowledge of Canadian societal and economic practices.

Sponsoring groups may also provide helpful information to refugees about life in their future community of resettlement. Pre-arrival contact is particularly beneficial because sponsors can answer the refugees' questions and prepare them for their arrival in Canada. The Government of Canada's website also offers information on accessing healthcare and housing, planning finances, enrolling in schools, transportation, improving English and French, and connecting with other immigrant communities. Canada has also developed multilingual information bulletins for refugees that are distributed by some visa officers at the refugees' overseas interview.

It is important that all actors helping to prepare refugees for resettlement to Canada manage expectations carefully to ensure the resettlement process is not undermined by tensions, anxieties, and unrealistic expectations. All actors working with refugees should provide clear and consistent information on the limits and possibilities of resettlement. In this regard, disseminating accurate information to refugee communities already in resettlement countries is important for reducing unrealistic resettlement expectations. All family members should receive appropriate counselling to prepare for resettlement.

In the case of UNHCR referrals, UNHCR ensures utmost transparency regarding resettlement processing, highlighting that resettlement takes place based on set criteria and follows defined procedures. Any significant changes to the anticipated processing times or procedures should be communicated promptly. Refugees are also informed of the uncertainties and problems that may arise during the resettlement process, and that the ultimate decision rests with the resettlement country.

RESOURCES

- 🌐 RSTP, “What to expect”
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugees/what-to-expect/>

- 🌐 Government of Canada, “Start your life in Canada”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/index.asp>

- 🌐 International Organization for Migration, “Pre-Departure Orientation/Cultural Orientation”
http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/pre-departure_orientation.pdf

(ii) WHAT SHOULD REFUGEES EXPECT WHEN THEY ARRIVE IN THEIR COUNTRY OF RESETTLEMENT?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Refugees should generally expect their sponsoring group to welcome them at the airport and bring them to their temporary or permanent living accommodations. The sponsoring group may provide a welcome package with essential items such as a city bus map, sponsoring group members' contact information, toiletries, and basic medication. Sponsors should also consider purchasing and preparing familiar foods for the family to have during their first few days. During the twelve-month sponsorship undertaking, refugees can expect their sponsoring groups to provide them income assistance unless they become self-sufficient. Sponsoring groups are also required to provide settlement support.

DETAIL

Refugees should generally expect their sponsoring group to welcome them at the airport and bring them to their temporary living accommodations. The sponsoring group may provide a welcome package with essential items such as a city bus map, sponsoring group members' contact information, toiletries, and basic medication. Sponsors should also consider stocking the accommodations with familiar foods to help the family feel at home during their first few days.

Shortly after arrival, sponsoring groups should provide sponsored refugees an orientation about their new home and neighborhood. Orientation includes using public transportation, a tour of their new place of resettlement, and a visit to the grocery store to purchase groceries, including familiar foods, and learn more about food costs. If pre-arrival contact was not established, the refugees and sponsoring groups would also benefit from meeting to discuss the formers' resettlement needs, provide guidance and advice on life in the country of resettlement, the refugees' rights and expectations, and answer any questions.

During the twelve-month sponsorship undertaking, refugees can expect their sponsoring group to provide them income assistance unless they become self-sufficient. Sponsoring groups are also required to provide settlement support such as helping the refugees find permanent accommodation; open a bank account, register for health coverage and school; find language courses; and look for employment or register with employment search programs.

RESOURCES

- 🔗 RSTP, "What to expect"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugees/what-to-expect/>
- 🔗 Government of Canada, "Start your life in Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/index.asp>
- 🔗 RSTP, "Orientation Guide and Resources"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/settlement-services/orientation-resources-guides/>
- 📄 Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>

(iii) WHAT CAN REFUGEES LEARN IN ADVANCE TO PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR LIFE IN A NEW COUNTRY?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Refugees are strongly encouraged to learn as much as they can about Canada to prepare themselves for resettlement. Refugees may wish to learn about the services they can access in their community of resettlement as well as the law and justice system. Refugees may obtain this information before arrival from the International Organization for Migration's orientation workshops, the Government of Canada's website, and their sponsoring groups (see 2.A.3(i)).

DETAIL

Refugees are strongly encouraged to learn as much as they can about Canada to prepare themselves for resettlement. In particular, they can find information about country's geography and climate, languages spoken, type of economy and major industries, and system of government. Refugees may also wish to learn about the services they can access in their communities of resettlement. These may include schools, language training programs, healthcare coverage and services, employment training programs, and legal assistance.

Refugees should learn about the law and justice system in Canada. Important information may include access to courts, legal representation, police services, the age of majority and consent, family law matters such as marriage, divorce, custody, and child protection, animal protection, and access to citizenship.

Refugees may obtain this information before arrival from the International Organization for Migration's orientation workshops, the Government of Canada's website, and their sponsoring groups.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>
-  RSTP, "What to expect"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugees/what-to-expect/>
-  Government of Canada, "Start your life in Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/index.asp>
-  International Organization for Migration, "Pre-Departure Orientation/Cultural Orientation"
http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/pre-departure_orientation.pdf

(iv) HOW IS PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION PROVIDED TO REFUGEES PRIOR TO ARRIVAL IN THEIR RESETTLEMENT COUNTRY?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada is responsible for administering pre-departure information sessions to refugees and all other economic classes prior to their departure. These sessions seek to provide newcomers with the information necessary to make informed settlement decisions and access settlement services, and to promote an understanding of cultural life in Canada. Implementation is subcontracted to the International Organization for Migration via the “Canadian Orientation Abroad” program. Sponsorship Agreement Holders and other sponsors may also provide additional pre-resettlement information.

DETAIL

The Canadian Orientation Abroad program is a three to five day in-person courses which covers topics such as:

- Important things to do before you arrive in Canada;
- Canada: A brief overview;
- A refugee’s rights and freedoms in Canada;
- Canadian law and justice;
- Canadian culture and customs;
- Cost of living;
- Important documents;
- Improving English and/or French language skills;
- Employment and income;
- Education;
- Housing;
- Health care in Canada;
- Managing expectations about Canada;
- Money and finances;
- Transportation;
- Communication and media;
- Community connections; and
- Becoming a Canadian citizen.

Sponsorship Agreement Holders may provide supplementary information on topics like:

- Travelling Abroad;
- Adaptation and culture shock; and
- Program-specific information (e.g. overview of life in higher academics).

For more information about how sponsors support refugees prior to their arrival in Canada, see 2.A.5.

RESOURCES

 IRCC, "Evaluation of the Overseas Orientation Initiatives"

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/ooi/findings.asp#ftn19>

 Canadian Orientation Abroad, "Resources"

<http://www.coa-oce.ca/resources/>

 World University Services of Canada, "Pre-Departure Guide for WUSC Sponsored Students"

<http://assets.wusc.ca/Website/Resources/StudentRefugeeProgram/predeparture.pdf>

(v) HOW DO REFUGEES LEARN ABOUT THE ROLE OF THEIR SPONSORS IN THEIR RESETTLEMENT?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsoring groups are strongly encouraged to explain their role and responsibilities towards the refugees. Refugees may learn more about sponsors' role in their resettlement from the sponsors themselves prior to landing in Canada, through, the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) cultural orientation workshops, and through the Government of Canada's website. After arrival, sponsoring groups may wish to provide sponsored refugees with more details about individual sponsors' roles for the coming year, and maintain regular communications with refugees regarding successes and challenges associated with their resettlement.

DETAIL

Sponsoring groups are strongly encouraged to explain their role and responsibilities towards the refugees. Pre-arrival contact is a beneficial opportunity for sponsoring groups to do this and learn more about the refugees' settlement needs. Refugees may also obtain information about the sponsoring group's role and responsibilities from the International Organization for Migration's pre-arrival cultural workshops and the Government of Canada's website.

After arrival, sponsoring groups may wish to provide the refugees with a list of their names, background information, individual roles in the refugees' resettlement, and contact information. Importantly, sponsors should highlight that their goal is to assist the refugees in becoming self-sufficient and integrate into Canadian society while respecting the refugees' right to respect and autonomy. For example, sponsoring groups should explain the refugees' budget for twelve months and living costs in their community of resettlement, but allow the refugees to ultimately decide how to use the financial assistance provided.

Sponsoring groups and refugees should also communicate regularly to ensure the sponsoring group is meeting its obligations. If the refugees feel their sponsoring group is not complying with its obligations, they may approach a settlement agency, the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program, Sponsorship Agreement Holders (where applicable), or their local migration office for assistance and possibly mediation (see 2.D.2).

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>

-  International Organization for Migration, "Pre-Departure Orientation/Cultural Orientation"
http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/pre-departure_orientation.pdf

-  RSTP, "Managing Expectations"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/managing-expectations/>

A.4 HOW ARE SPONSORSHIP-ELIGIBLE REFUGEES IDENTIFIED?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider partnerships and program design elements to identify eligible applicants for the private sponsorship program.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) How can sponsors assist particularly vulnerable refugees?
- (ii) Can private citizens or community groups nominate particular individuals for sponsorship?
- (iii) How can States work with referral organizations to identify sponsorship-eligible refugees?
- (iv) How can States work with sub-federal governments to select refugees?
- (v) What hybrid models of shared responsibility over refugee resettlement may be developed through collaboration between various actors?

RESOURCES

-  Michael Casasola, "The Indochinese Refugee Movement and the Subsequent Evolution of UNHCR and Canadian Resettlement Selection Policies and Practices" (Refuge, 2016)
<http://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/40270/36409>
-  IRCC, "OP 5 – Overseas Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op05-eng.pdf>
-  IRCC, Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/ref-sponsor.pdf>
-  UNHCR, "Resettlement Handbook: Country Chapter Canada"
<http://www.unhcr.org/3c5e55594.pdf>
-  RSTP, "Visa Office Referrals (VORs)"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Visa-Office-Referrals-VOR-Fact-Sheet-1.pdf>
-  RSTP, "Joint Assistance Sponsorships (JAS)"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Joint-Assistance-Sponsorship-JAS-Fact-Sheet-1.pdf>
-  IRCC, "Joint Assistance Program – Sponsoring refugees with special needs"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/refugees/sponsor/jas.asp>

- 🌐 RSTP, "Blended VOR Program – Frequently Asked Questions"
http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Blended-VOR-FAQ_2016.pdf

- 🌐 IRCC, "Blended Visa Office-Referral Program – Sponsoring Refugees"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/vor.asp>

- 🌐 IRCC, "Temporary Public Policy Concerning Tibetans Living in the State of Arunchal Pradesh in India"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/laws-policy/tibet.asp>

- 🌐 Project Tibet Society
<http://projecttibetsociety.ca/>

- 📄 IRCC, "Forging Our Legacy: Canadian Citizenship and Immigration, 1900-1977"
<http://archive.li/WRve8>

- 📄 Catherine Cullen, "Settled Syrian refugees can now identify family for sponsorship by Canadian groups" (CBC News, 3 February 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/syria-family-reunification-war-refugee-1.3432161>

- 📄 David Brier, "How to Select Refugees for Private Sponsorship"
<https://www.cato.org/blog/how-select-refugees-private-sponsorship>

(i) HOW CAN SPONSORS ASSIST PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Private sponsors are able to provide special assistance to particularly vulnerable refugees through the **Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)** program. Overseas visa officers identify government-assisted families with special needs – e.g. survivors of trauma or torture, persons with medical disabilities, victims of systemic discrimination, or particularly large families – and create online profiles which can be selected by Canadian sponsors. Government-assisted refugees already in Canada may also qualify for the JAS program post arrival. JAS refugees receive up to twenty-four months of income assistance from Canada and full settlement supports from private sponsors for the duration of the sponsorship undertaking.

DETAIL

The JAS program is only available to Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) and their Constituent Groups (CGs). SAHs and their CGs must submit a special application package in order to qualify to sponsor families with special needs through the JAS program.

JAS sponsorships generally last twenty-four months, but in some cases may involve undertakings of up to thirty-six months. The Government of Canada provides income support for up to 24 months to cover the costs of food, shelter, clothing, and basic household goods. Sponsors are responsible for providing resettlement supports, and must be able to provide services required to address the special needs.

RESOURCES

- IRCC, “Joint Assistance Program – Sponsoring refugees with special needs”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/refugees/sponsor/jas.asp>

(ii) CAN PRIVATE CITIZENS OR COMMUNITY GROUPS NOMINATE PARTICULAR INDIVIDUALS FOR SPONSORSHIP?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

In Canada, there are two main ways to identify refugees for private sponsorship:

- **SPONSOR-REFERRED:** the sponsoring group names the refugee or refugee family it wishes to sponsor; or
- **THROUGH A PARTNER REFERRAL ORGANIZATION: UNHCR** or another approved referral agency refers the refugees to a Canadian mission overseas for resettlement to Canada. The visa officer in the mission determines whether the refugees will be resettled to Canada under the Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) program, or through private sponsorship through the Visa-Office-Referred (VOR) program, the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program, or the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program (see 2.A.2(i)).

DETAIL

SPONSOR-REFERRED: The sponsoring group may have obtained the refugee referral from an overseas contact, a friend, a relative in Canada, or elsewhere. Private sponsors submit the sponsorship application on behalf of the sponsor-referred refugee to the Government of Canada. In most cases, refugees should be resettled in their sponsors' community.

To be privately sponsored as a refugee by a Group of Five or a Community Sponsor (see 2.B.3), the refugee applicant must have valid proof of refugee status conferred by UNHCR or their host state. Having refugee status means that UNHCR or the host state has already examined a person's claim for asylum and formally recognized them as a refugee. Groups of Five and Community sponsors must submit valid proof of refugee status along with the sponsorship application to the Government of Canada. Refugee applicants without refugee status recognition can only be sponsored by a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) (see 2.B.3).

THROUGH A PARTNER REFERRAL ORGANIZATION: Private sponsors may contact the Government of Canada to ask if any cases referred by UNHCR are available for sponsorship through the VOR, BVOR, and JAS programs. Once the refugees are landed in Canada, the sponsoring group provides settlement and varying amounts of financial support (based on the sponsorship program selected by Canada) throughout the sponsorship period (see 2.A.2(i)).

Many refugees that resettle to Canada through private sponsorship or government resettlement programs leave family members behind in difficult situations. Private sponsorship becomes an important avenue for newcomer families to reunite with loved ones who are also refugees by sponsoring them to come to Canada. This trend is known in the Canadian sponsorship sector as the "echo effect."

RESOURCES

 IRCC, "Guide 6000 – Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/E16000TOC.asp>

 IRCC, "Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program – Who may be sponsored?"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/section-2.asp>

 Jodi Kantor and Catrin Einhorn, "What Does It Mean to Help One Family?" (New York Times, 8 September 2016)

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/10/22/world/americas/canada-refugees-syria.html>

(iii) HOW CAN STATES WORK WITH REFERRAL ORGANIZATIONS TO IDENTIFY SPONSORSHIP-ELIGIBLE REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada accepts referrals from UNHCR or a referral organization with whom the government has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

DETAIL

In order for UNHCR to refer refugees for resettlement to Canada under the Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) program, or through private sponsorship through the Visa Office-Referred (VOR) program, the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program, or the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program (see 2.A.2(i)), refugees must meet the preconditions for resettlement considerations and fall under at least one of the UNHCR resettlement submission categories. Sponsor-referred refugees (also known as “named” refugees”) are not generally referred for resettlement by UNHCR or other partner agencies.

UNHCR is mandated to provide international protection to refugees and to assist governments in finding durable solutions for them. The three durable solutions are: (1) Voluntary repatriation, in which refugees return in safety and with dignity to their country of origin and re-avail themselves of national protection; (2) Local integration, in which refugees legally, economically and socially integrate in the host country, availing themselves of the national protection of the host government; and (3) Resettlement, in which refugees are selected and transferred from the country of refuge to a third State which has agreed to admit them as refugees with permanent resident status.

To be submitted for resettlement, individuals or families must meet the preconditions for resettlement consideration; and fall under one or more of the UNHCR resettlement submission categories:

- **Legal and/or Physical Protection Needs** of the refugee in the country of refuge (including threat of refoulement);
- **Survivors of Torture and/or Violence**, where repatriation or the conditions in the country of asylum could result in further traumatization and/or heightened risk; or where appropriate treatment is not available;
- **Medical Needs**, in particular life-saving treatment that is unavailable in the country of refuge;
- **Women and Girls at Risk**, who have protection problems particular to their gender;
- **Family Reunification**, when resettlement is the only means to reunite refugee family members who, owing to refugee flight or displacement, are separated by borders or entire continents;
- **Children and Adolescents at Risk**, including unaccompanied children where a best interest determination supports resettlement;
- **Lack of Foreseeable Alternative Durable Solutions**, which is generally promoted by UNHCR to address the needs of specific refugee groups, and when resettlement can be used strategically, implemented within comprehensive solution strategies, and/or can help unlock protracted refugee situations.

UNHCR works with governments to review admission targets and country-specific criteria for resettlement.

Canada also works with other referral organizations, which will usually provide the visa office with a referral form containing relevant information about the refugee.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Intake: Referrals from the UNHCR"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/intake/unhcr.asp>

-  UNHCR, "Resettlement Handbook: Country Chapter Canada"
<http://www.unhcr.org/3c5e55594.pdf>

-  UNHCR, "Chapter One: Resettlement within UNHCR's Mandate: International Protection and the Search for Durable Solutions"
<http://www.unhcr.org/3d464b239.html>

-  UNHCR, "UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs – 2017"
<http://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/575836267/unhcr-projected-global-resettlement-needs-2017.html>

(iv) HOW CAN STATES WORK WITH SUB-FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS TO SELECT REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

In Canada, certain elements of immigration are a shared responsibility between the federal government, provinces and territories. In accordance with its international obligations and constitutionally mandated responsibilities, the federal government of Canada determines which persons are eligible for refugee protection and admissible to Canada (see 2.A.1 and 2.A.6).

Specific constitutional provisions apply to the Province of Quebec, which establishes its own criteria in selecting refugees for resettlement. However, the federal government continues to be responsible for ensuring refugees are eligible and admissible.

DETAIL

The Canadian Constitution divides legislative powers between two orders of government: federal (matters of national interest) and provincial (matters of local interest). Section 95 of Canada's Constitution gives concurrent jurisdiction over immigration to the provincial and federal governments, although in practice the federal government is primarily responsible for selecting and processing refugees for resettlement to Canada. Many aspects of refugee resettlement (e.g. access to services like education or health) fall to the provincial and territorial governments of Canada. Specific constitutional provisions apply to the Province of Quebec, which is responsible for selecting refugees to resettle to Quebec based on referrals from the Government of Canada.

To be selected for resettlement in Quebec, the refugees must first be recognized as eligible for protection and admissible to Canada. Canada refers approved refugees to the Government of Quebec for selection. Refugees referred for resettlement to Quebec must fill out an application called the "Certificat de sélection du Québec" (CSQ – Québec Selection Certificate). The application is then assessed by Quebec based on a number of factors, including: language proficiency, relationship to Quebec (e.g. family member residing in the province), and work experience.

Because of the shared responsibility over refugee resettlement between Canada and Quebec, the two governments consult on a regular basis through formal mechanisms and work together, particularly in annual planning exercises to ensure that necessary resources are identified and made available. For instance, Canada must ensure that in addition to refugees destined elsewhere in Canada, visa officers are available to assess the eligibility and admissibility of the number of refugees Quebec determines to admit in a given year.

RESOURCES



Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-4.html>



Penny Becklumb, "Immigration: The Canada-Quebec Accord"

<https://lop.parl.ca/content/lop/ResearchPublications/bp252-e.htm>



Quebec Ministry of Diversity and Inclusion, "Sharing of responsibilities between the Federal and Quebec governments"

<http://services.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/immigrate-settle/humanitarian-immigration/humanitarian-immigration/sharing-responsibilities.html>

- 🌐 Quebec Ministry of Diversity and Inclusion, "Being Selected by Quebec"
<http://services.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/immigrate-settle/humanitarian-immigration/refugee-selected/selection.html>

- 🌐 Quebec Ministry of Diversity and Inclusion, "Sponsored refugee"
<http://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/immigrate-settle/humanitarian-immigration/sponsored-refugee/index.html>

(v) WHAT HYBRID MODELS OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY OVER REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT MAY BE DEVELOPED THROUGH COLLABORATION BETWEEN VARIOUS ACTORS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada has a number of models where responsibility for identifying refugees and providing financial and settlement support is divided among various actors. The primary hybrid model in Canada is the Blended-Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program, which matches refugees identified for resettlement by UNHCR with private sponsors in Canada. Refugees resettled under the BVOR program receive six months of income support from Canada and six months from the sponsoring group, for a total of twelve months of income support. In addition, sponsoring groups are responsible for providing start-up costs and settlement support for the entire twelve month sponsorship period. Other hybrid models include the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program and programs under the 3/9 or 4/8 models.

DETAIL

The BVOR showcases Canada's collaboration with various actors to increase access to private sponsorship for Canadians. The BVOR program matches refugees identified for resettlement by UNHCR with private sponsors in Canada. It is referred to as "blended" because it is a cost-sharing arrangement between Canada and private sponsors. Refugees resettled under the BVOR program receive income support from Canada for six months after their arrival, during months 2-7. Private sponsors pay the other six months of support, months 1 and 8-12, plus all of the startup costs. Private sponsors are required to provide settlement, emotional, and moral support for the entire duration of the sponsorship undertaking.

The JAS program is for government-assisted refugees referred by UNHCR who have special needs and who may need more support than other refugees to settle in Canada. Under the JAS program, the government and a private sponsor support the refugees for up to twenty-four months. Canada provides the financial assistance for the full length of the sponsorship while the sponsoring group provides emotional and social support.

Under the 3/9 and 4/8 models, Canada provides three or four months (depending on the program) of income support, and private sponsors provide nine or eight months of financial support as well as social, emotional, and settlement support for the entire twelve months of sponsorship. Examples include a Special 3/9 Sponsorship Pilot Program for refugees from the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s; sponsorship of Sierra Leoneans in 2001 under a 4/8 model; and the current pilot Rainbow Refugee Assistance Program (3/9) to sponsor lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer refugees.

Other sponsoring groups may collaborate with on-the-ground organizations in the refugees' country of residence to complete their private sponsorship application and provide support while the refugees wait for resettlement.

RESOURCES

 Shauna Labman, "Private Sponsorship: Complementary or Conflicting Interests?" (Refuge, 2016)
<https://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/viewFile/40266/36411>

 IRCC, "Joint Assistance Program – Sponsoring refugees with special needs"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/refugees/sponsor/jas.asp>

- IRCC, “Blended Visa Office-Referred Program – Sponsoring Refugees”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/vor.asp>

A.5 HOW ARE SPONSORS AND REFUGEES IN CONTACT PRE-ARRIVAL?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

There may be several benefits in facilitating contact between sponsors and refugees before the latter's arrival (e.g. updates, building trust, managing expectations).

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What types of information should sponsors be communicating with refugees prior to arrival, and vice versa?
- (ii) How can sponsors manage expectations regarding status of applications and processing times?
- (iii) How will refugees and sponsors be updated concerning the progress of their application?
- (iv) What communications technologies are best for sponsor-refugee communications?
- (v) How should sponsors and refugees deal with language barriers when communicating with each other prior to arrival?

RESOURCES

-  RSTP, "What to expect"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugees/what-to-expect/>
-  RSTP, "Managing Expectations"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/managing-expectations/>
-  RSTP, "Overview of Sponsorship Responsibilities: Pre-Arrival Duties"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/responsibilities/>
-  IRCC, "Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/index.asp>
-  IRCC, "Operational Bulletin 323, July 15, 2011"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/bulletins/2011/ob323.asp>
-  Jess McHugh, "Refugee Crisis Europe 2015: How Syrians are Using Smartphones to Travel Through Western Europe" (International Business Times, 28 October 2015)
<http://www.ibtimes.com/refugee-crisis-europe-2015-how-syrians-are-using-smartphones-travel-through-western-2152496>
-  CDAC-N, "Blog: Communicating with Persons of Concern in the Syrian Refugee Response"
<http://www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20140110111759-x8gly>

 UNHCR, "Increasing two-way communication with refugees on the move in Europe"
<http://www.unhcr.org/innovation/increasing-two-way-communication-with-refugees-on-the-move-in-europe/>

(i) WHAT TYPES OF INFORMATION SHOULD SPONSORS BE COMMUNICATING WITH REFUGEES PRIOR TO ARRIVAL, AND VICE VERSA?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Prior to arrival, sponsoring groups should explain their role and responsibilities towards the sponsored refugees. Refugees should let sponsors know if they have any special needs, and the refugees' educational and employment backgrounds to explore appropriate access to services, education, and employment opportunities. Pre-arrival communications are important to manage refugees' expectations regarding the sponsors' role and what life will be like in Canada.

DETAIL

Sponsoring groups should explain their role and responsibilities toward the sponsored refugees prior to their travel to Canada. Refugees can learn more about sponsors' role in their resettlement from the sponsors themselves, the International Organization for Migration's cultural orientation workshops, and the Government of Canada's website. Sponsors should also provide information about the community that the refugees will settle in and available services.

Pre-arrival contact is particularly beneficial since sponsors can answer the refugees' questions and prepare them for their arrival in Canada. It is also beneficial to help sponsors manage refugees' expectations regarding what life will be like in Canada.

Refugees should let sponsors know if there are any special medical needs so that sponsors can ensure they have access to appropriate services upon arrival. It is also helpful to sponsors to know if any special accommodations are required to find appropriate housing, and refugees' educational and employment backgrounds to explore future employment options in Canada.

For more information on refugee-sponsor communications pre-arrival, see 2.A.5.

RESOURCES

-  RSTP, "Managing Expectations: A Resource Kit for Refugee Sponsors"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/expecttool2013.pdf>
-  RSTP, "Managing Expectations"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/managing-expectations/>
-  IRCC, "Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/index.asp>
-  RSTP, "The Rights of Privately Sponsored Refugees"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/RSTP-Rights-of-PSRs-National-Updated-Nov.-4-2016.pdf>
-  RSTP, "Managing Expectations" - Video
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/managing-expectations/>

(ii) HOW CAN SPONSORS MANAGE EXPECTATIONS REGARDING STATUS OF APPLICATIONS AND PROCESSING TIMES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsors should be open and transparent with the refugees they are sponsoring regarding the status of their application and processing times. Refugees should be informed at the outset that private sponsorship processing times may be lengthy. Processing time can be used to build refugee-sponsor relationships pre-arrival and help refugees prepare and build skills that will help them integrate into life in Canada.

DETAIL

Processing private sponsorship applications can take a long time. In Canada, sponsors' eligibility must first be assessed before the application is sent to an overseas visa office for processing of the refugee application. Refugees referred to Visa Office-Referred programs (see 2.B.3(i)) are pre-approved as refugees by UNHCR and Canada before being matched with Canadian private sponsors, which may reduce the processing times for the sponsorship. Overseas processing times vary according to the location of the visa office and may take several months to years in some cases. The Government of Canada updates average processing times on its website.

Uncertainty regarding processing times may cause refugees stress. Sponsors may use this time to build relationships with the refugees and prepare them for life in Canada (see 2.A.5(i)).

Sponsors should notify refugees immediately with any updates to their application (see 2.A.5(iii)).

It is important that governments communicate clearly with both sponsors and refugees regarding the community sponsorship program's timelines and the requirements of the application process to ensure refugees possess all necessary documentation, information, and that they are available for scheduled appointments.

RESOURCES

-  RSTP, "Managing Expectations: A Resource Kit for Refugee Sponsors"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/expectool2013.pdf>
-  RSTP, "Managing Expectations"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/managing-expectations/>
-  IRCC, "Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/index.asp>
-  RSTP, "The Rights of Privately Sponsored Refugees"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/RSTP-Rights-of-PSRs-National-Updated-Nov.-4-2016.pdf>
-  RSTP, "Managing Expectations" - Video
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/managing-expectations/>
-  IRCC, "Check application processing times"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/EnGLIsh/information/times/index.asp>

(iii) HOW WILL REFUGEES AND SPONSORS BE UPDATED CONCERNING THE PROGRESS OF THEIR APPLICATION?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The Government of Canada maintains an online application status tool that provides refugees and sponsors with updates on the status of their application. Assessing refugee applications can be a complex process with multiple steps and partners involved. This can make it difficult for the Government of Canada to provide updated and accurate information in all circumstances.

The Government of Canada publishes estimated processing times for each of its visa offices. If an application exceeds the estimated processing time, the refugee/sponsor may contact the Government of Canada by completing an online form.

Once a final decision has been made and travel arrangements completed, the overseas visa office will inform the in-Canada centralized resettlement processing centre and private sponsors of the refugee(s)' arrival via email so that final preparations can be made.

DETAIL

The Government of Canada will contact refugees and/or sponsors at a number of stages following submission of an application:

- To provide an acknowledgement of receipt once the application is received and the file has been created. A case number is also generated that can be used for online tracking of the application.
- To send a message notifying sponsors and refugees that the sponsoring group has either been approved or refused. The approval letter will include a link to where refugees and sponsors can find processing times for applications.
- To schedule refugees' interviews; and
- To convey the final decision on refugees' applications (approved/refused).

Once a final decision has been made and travel arrangements completed, the overseas visa office will inform the Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa and private sponsors of the refugee(s)' arrival via email so that final preparations can be made.

The refugees and/or sponsors should inform Canada of any and all changes to their contact information and application, including changes in family composition, contact information, official representation, or withdrawal.

RESOURCES

- IRCC, "Visa offices outside Canada: Countries/Territories and corresponding Canadian visa offices"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/offices/apply-where.asp>
- IRCC, "Destining and travel arrangements"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/processing/travel/index.asp>

- IRCC, "Check application processing times"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/English/information/times/index.asp>

- IRCC, "IRCC Web Form"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/contacts/web-form.asp>

- IRCC, "After you apply: get next steps - Sponsor a refugee"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/apply-after.asp>

- IRCC, "Client Application Status Portal"
https://services3.cic.gc.ca/ecas/security.do?lang=en&_ga=1.54760747.1291414707.1490960332

- RSTP, "Checking the status of an Application"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/processing/checking-the-status-of-an-application/>

(iv) WHAT COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES ARE BEST FOR SPONSOR-REFUGEE COMMUNICATIONS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsoring groups and refugees may use various means to communicate with each other before the refugees' arrival in Canada. Depending on the circumstances, sponsoring groups and refugees may prefer to communicate over audio/video programs like Skype. They may also opt to use text messaging applications like Whatsapp or Viber. E-mail communication may be more beneficial for longer messages or to send important documents between sponsoring groups and refugees.

DETAIL

Sponsoring groups and refugees may use various means to communicate with each other before the refugees' arrival. Pre-arrival communication is important to introduce the sponsoring group members to the refugees (and vice versa), to help refugees prepare for their resettlement interviews, to improve their English or French, to manage sponsoring groups' and refugees' expectations, and to answer any of the refugees' questions about life in Canada.

Skype or other audio/video programs are useful communication tools since refugees and sponsoring groups can see each other's faces, resulting in a more personal connection. However, Skype calls may be difficult to schedule depending on the sponsoring group and refugees' differing time zones. An interpreter may also be needed to assist with communication.

Sponsoring groups and refugees may opt to use text communication applications like Whatsapp or Viber. Text communication is useful to exchange simple information, ask and answer questions, or send encouraging and supportive messages to refugees.

E-mail communication may be more beneficial for longer messages or to send important documents between sponsoring groups and refugees. For example, many sponsoring groups prepare the refugees' resettlement application forms and then e-mail them to the refugees to sign. Refugees may e-mail documents that are not in English or French to their sponsoring groups, who in turn obtain certified translations of them.

Sponsoring groups and refugees may need to be cautious about using certain communication technology tools. For example, some refugees may fear reprisal from their country of transit or host country's government, who may be monitoring their personal information over email, if certain information is leaked to them.

RESOURCES

- 1 Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>
- 2 RSTP, "Overview of Sponsorship Responsibilities: Pre-Arrival Duties"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/responsibilities/>
- 3 Farhad Manjoo, "For Millions of Immigrants, a Common Language: WhatsApp" (New York Times, 21 December 2016)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/21/technology/for-millions-of-immigrants-a-common-language-whatsapp.html>

 Luke Graham, "How smartphones are helping refugees in Europe" (CNBC, 11 September 2015)
<https://www.cnbc.com/2015/09/11/how-smartphones-are-helping-refugees-in-europe.html>

(v) HOW SHOULD SPONSORS AND REFUGEES DEAL WITH LANGUAGE BARRIERS WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH EACH OTHER PRIOR TO ARRIVAL?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Where there are language barriers, sponsoring groups may wish to get assistance from interpreters. Some sponsoring groups and refugees may also rely on online translation programs like Word Reference or Google Translate to communicate via text messaging applications like Whatsapp or Viber. A translator may also join a group message chat on one of these text messaging applications to translate messages between the sponsoring group and refugees. Finally, refugees are encouraged to attend English or French language courses in the host country to help minimize the language barrier and more easily integrate into Canadian society.

DETAIL

In the case of family-linked sponsorships, the sponsoring group and refugees may speak the same language. However, where there are language barriers, sponsoring groups may wish to get assistance from interpreters. Skype calls may be difficult to schedule depending on the sponsoring group, interpreter, and refugees' differing time zones.

Some sponsoring groups and refugees may rely on online translation programs like Word Reference or Google Translate to communicate using text messaging applications like Whatsapp or Viber. This is a useful way to communicate simple information, but sponsoring groups and refugees should be weary of potential miscommunications. An interpreter/translator may also join a group message chat on one of these text messaging applications to translate messages between the sponsoring group and refugees.

Refugees are encouraged to attend English or French language courses in their current country of residence to help minimize the language barrier and more easily integrate into Canadian society.

RESOURCES

-  Farhad Manjoo, "For Millions of Immigrants, a Common Language: WhatsApp" (New York Times, 21 December 2016)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/21/technology/for-millions-of-immigrants-a-common-language-whatsapp.html>

-  Luke Graham, "How smartphones are helping refugees in Europe" (CNBC, 11 September 2015)
<https://www.cnn.com/2015/09/11/how-smartphones-are-helping-refugees-in-europe.html>

-  Google Translate
<https://translate.google.ca/>

-  Word Reference
<http://www.wordreference.com/>

A.6 HOW ARE REFUGEES SCREENED?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Need to consider how to ensure resettled refugees will not pose a safety or security threat to residents of the country of resettlement.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What should refugees be screened for to ensure they do not pose security risks?
- (ii) What should refugees be screened for to ensure they do not pose a risk to public health?
- (iii) Which actors should be responsible for screening refugees?
- (iv) How can resettlement countries be certain they have the best available information on which to base their assessments?
- (v) Who should cover the costs of screening?
- (vi) What happens if refugees do not pass their screening?

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "OP 5 – Overseas Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op05-eng.pdf>
-  IRCC, "Processing procedures for resettlement from overseas: Determining admissibility"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/processing/det-admissibility.asp>
-  IRCC, "ENF 2/OP 18: Evaluating Inadmissibility"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf02-eng.pdf>
-  Canadian Security Intelligence Service, "The Security Screening Program"
<https://www.csis.gc.ca/sctrscrng/index-en.php>
-  Canada Border Services Agency, "Security screening"
<http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/security-securite/screen-verific-eng.html>
-  RSTP, "Fact Sheet: All About Refusals"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/All-About-Refusals-Fact-Sheet-1.pdf>
-  "Here's how refugees are screened before arriving in Canada" (Global News, 19 November 2015)
<http://globalnews.ca/news/2349421/heres-how-refugees-are-screened-before-arriving-in-canada/>

 Marina Jimenez, "Syrian refugees will face three levels of intense screening" (The Star, 18 November 2015)
<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/11/18/syrian-refugees-will-face-three-levels-of-intense-screening.html>

(i) WHAT SHOULD REFUGEES BE SCREENED FOR TO ENSURE THEY DO NOT POSE SECURITY RISKS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada conducts security and criminality screening for all visitors, immigrants, and refugee applicants. As with other permanent residents, refugees can be inadmissible to Canada if they have been convicted of certain crimes, or there are reasonable grounds to believe they have committed or will commit acts that would render them inadmissible to Canada. Security-related grounds for inadmissibility include terrorism, organized crime, being a danger to the security of Canada, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

DETAIL

Sections 34-37 of Canada's *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)* set out the security-related grounds on which refugee applicants can be found to be inadmissible to Canada.

Canada works with Canadian and foreign law enforcement agencies, and security partners such as the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) to conduct thorough security screening of refugee applicants.

CSIS is mandated to conduct security screenings through ss. 14-15 of Canada's *CSIS Act*, as well as through the *IRPA* and *Citizenship Act*. CSIS prepares a report to the Government of Canada with recommendations on whether the person concerned constitutes a threat to the security of Canada. However, the ultimate decision on (in)admissibility in resettlement applications is made by the visa officer, taking the recommendations of the security partners into account.

RESOURCES

 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-2.5/>

 IRCC, "OP1 – Procedures"

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op01-eng.pdf>

 IRCC, "Processing procedures for resettlement from overseas: Determining admissibility"

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/processing/det-admissibility.asp>

 IRCC, "ENF 2/OP 18: Evaluating Inadmissibility"

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf02-eng.pdf>

 Canadian Security Intelligence Service, "The Security Screening Program"

<https://www.csis.gc.ca/sctrscrng/index-en.php>

 Canada Border Services Agency, "Security screening"

<http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/security-securite/screen-verific-eng.html>

 Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-23/>



Citizenship Act

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-29/>

(ii) WHAT SHOULD REFUGEES BE SCREENED FOR TO ENSURE THEY DO NOT POSE A RISK TO PUBLIC HEALTH?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada requires refugee applicants to undergo medical examinations to ensure they do not pose a danger to public health or safety in Canada. Active pulmonary tuberculosis and untreated syphilis are considered a danger to public health.

It is recommended that refugees request a copy of their medical results and vaccination record from the physician that does their medical examination overseas. These documents are useful to bring to medical visits once in Canada.

DETAIL

Unlike other immigrants and visitors to Canada, refugee applicants will not be found to be inadmissible to Canada if they have health issues that may cause excessive demand on health or social services (*Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, s. 38(2), *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*, Reg. 139(4)). Refugee applicants will only be found to be inadmissible if they are found to pose a risk to public health or be a danger to public safety (*Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, s. 38(1)-(2)).

DANGER TO PUBLIC HEALTH: Active pulmonary tuberculosis and untreated syphilis are considered conditions that pose a risk to public health.

DANGER TO PUBLIC SAFETY: Refugees assessed to have a risk of sudden incapacity or unpredictable or violent behavior (e.g. mental health conditions, sociopathic disorders) may be considered risks to public safety and inadmissible to Canada.

A medical examination includes any or all of the following (*Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*, Reg. 29):

- A physical examination;
- A mental examination;
- A review of past medical history;
- Laboratory tests;
- Diagnostic tests; and
- A medical assessment of records respecting the applicant.

If a refugee applicant has a treatable condition, that person may receive treatment and undergo a subsequent medical evaluation to satisfy the visa officer that he or she no longer poses a risk to public health or danger to public safety and is therefore admissible to Canada.

RESOURCES

-  Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/l-2.5/>

-  Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/sor-2002-227/>

-  IRCC, "Evaluation of the Health Screening and Notification Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/E8-2013-HSN-English.pdf>

-  IRCC, "Immigration Medical Exam (IME)"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/medic/exam/index.asp>

-  IRCC, "Protected Persons – Processing applications for permanent residence – Stage 2: admissibility"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/perm/protect/admissibility.asp>

(iii) WHICH ACTORS SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SCREENING REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Responsibility for screening refugees rests with various Government of Canada officials or in partnership with authorized actors, each of whom is specifically trained to perform their given role. Refugees are screened for their eligibility, criminal/security background, and their health.

DETAIL

CRIMINAL AND SECURITY EXAMINATIONS

- Refugees have their identity and documents verified at all stages of processing by Canadian visa officers, with support from law enforcement and security partners as needed, before they are accepted for resettlement to Canada. Refugees have their identity and documents verified at all stages of processing. Highly trained and experienced officers interview refugees and conduct robust criminality and security checks, and information is checked against multiple databases.
- Visa officers conduct in-person interviews with refugees to assess eligibility and admissibility. Information is sought directly from the refugee applicant to determine if there are security/criminality factors that may pose a threat to the safety or security of Canadians.
- Canada works with Canadian and foreign law enforcement agencies and security partners such as the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) to conduct thorough security screening of refugee applicants.
- CSIS is mandated to conduct security screenings through ss. 14-15 of Canada's *CSIS Act*, as well as through the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* and *Citizenship Act*. CSIS prepares a report to the Government of Canada with recommendations on whether the person concerned constitutes a threat to the security of Canada. However, the ultimate decision on (in)admissibility in resettlement applications is made by the visa officer, taking the recommendations of the security partners into account.
- Canada has also entered into information sharing agreements and arrangements with international partners to facilitate admissibility decisions. For more information see 2.A.2(vii).

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

- Only physicians authorized by the Government of Canada may carry out immigration medical examinations. Canada helps refugees locate an authorized doctor in their country, territory or region for their immigration medical exam.
- The Government of Canada, not the panel physician, makes the final decision about a refugee's admissibility.

Refugees must pass all security checks and medical screening before Canada will issue a permanent resident visa.

RESOURCES

🌐 IRCC, "Find a Panel Physician"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/pp-md/pp-list.aspx>

(iv) HOW CAN RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES BE CERTAIN THEY HAVE THE BEST AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON WHICH TO BASE THEIR ASSESSMENTS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Highly trained and experienced officers interview refugees and conduct robust criminality and security checks to make sure they do not pose a security risk to Canada. Screening occurs at every stage of processing, information is checked against multiple databases, and Canada works with many domestic and international security and law enforcement partners to ensure that the best available information is obtained. Visa officers conduct in-person interviews with refugees to assess eligibility and admissibility. Information is sought directly from the refugee applicant to determine if there are any security/criminality factors in an individual's background that would pose a threat to the safety or security of Canadians.

DETAIL

CRIMINAL AND SECURITY EXAMINATIONS

- Canadian visa officers verify refugee applicant identity and documents through all stages of processing, with support from law enforcement and security partners as needed.
- Canadian officers abroad collect biographical and biometric information of each refugee applicant. These officers also check immigration, law enforcement, and security databases for information relating to the following criteria: security, human or international rights violations, criminality, serious criminality, and organized criminality. For more information, see 2.A.6(i).
- Fingerprints are compared against the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's (RCMP) records of Canadian criminals, refugee claimants, previous deportees, and previous immigration. Biographical and biometric information is also checked against Canadian and U.S. immigration, law enforcement, and security databases.
- Canada works with Canadian and foreign law enforcement agencies and security partners such as the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) to conduct thorough security screening of refugee applicants.
- CBSA prepares a report to the Government of Canada with recommendations on whether the refugee applicant constitutes a threat to the security of Canada. However, the ultimate decision on (in)admissibility is made by the visa officer, taking the recommendations of the security partners into account.
- Canada has also entered into information sharing agreements and arrangements with international partners to facilitate admissibility decisions. For more information see 2.A.2(vii).

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

- A Government of Canada authorized physician will complete a medical exam of each refugee, which includes screening for contagious diseases (such as tuberculosis or untreated syphilis). A refugee is inadmissible on health grounds if their health condition (a) is likely to be a danger to public health; or (b) is likely to be a danger to public safety. For more information see 2.A.6(ii).
- The Government of Canada, not the panel physician, makes the final decision about a refugee's admissibility.

RESOURCES

-  Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/l-2.5/>

-  IRCC, “OP 5 – Overseas Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op05-eng.pdf>

-  IRCC, “OP1 – Procedures”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op01-eng.pdf>

-  IRCC, “After you apply: get next steps - Sponsor a refugee”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/apply-after.asp>

-  IRCC, “Processing procedures for resettlement from overseas: Determining admissibility”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/processing/det-admissibility.asp>

-  IRCC, “ENF 2/OP 18: Evaluating Inadmissibility”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf02-eng.pdf>

-  Canadian Security Intelligence Service, “The Security Screening Program”
<https://www.csis.gc.ca/scrtscrnng/index-en.php>

-  Canada Border Services Agency, “Security screening”
<http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/security-securite/screen-verific-eng.html>

-  “Here’s how refugees are screened before arriving in Canada” (Global News, 19 November 2015)
<http://globalnews.ca/news/2349421/heres-how-refugees-are-screened-before-arriving-in-canada/>

-  Marina Jimenez, “Syrian refugees will face three levels of intense screening” (The Star, 18 November 2015)
<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/11/18/syrian-refugees-will-face-three-levels-of-intense-screening.html>

-  Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-23/>

-  Citizenship Act
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-29/>

-  IRCC, “Medical exam for permanent residents”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/medical/medexams-perm.asp>

-  IRCC, “Resettlement from overseas: Conducting interviews”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/processing/interviews.asp>

(v) WHO SHOULD COVER THE COSTS OF SCREENING?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The costs of all screening activities are covered by the Government of Canada or its screening partners.

DETAIL

Article 34 of the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* states that “The Contracting States shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees. They shall in particular make every effort to expedite naturalization proceedings and to reduce as far as possible the charges and costs of such proceedings”.

Until 1 April 2017, Canada offered loans to refugee applicants to cover the costs of their medical examinations (“admissibility loan”). As of 1 April 2017, these costs are now covered by the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP). The IFHP has been further expanded to provide coverage to refugees for the costs of follow-up treatment for diseases affecting admissibility to Canada (e.g. tuberculosis, syphilis); vaccinations; medical support during travel; and management and control of communicable diseases in refugee camps.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, “IFHP Overview and Immigration Medical Examination”
[http://rapconference.ca/pdf/videos/Plenary 6-IFHP and IME-Mar 9 2017.pdf](http://rapconference.ca/pdf/videos/Plenary%206-IFHP%20and%20IME-Mar%209%202017.pdf)

-  IRCC, “Interim Federal Health Program: Summary of Coverage”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/summary-ifhp.asp>

(vi) WHAT HAPPENS IF REFUGEES DO NOT PASS THEIR SCREENING?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

If refugees do not pass their screening for medical, security, or criminality reasons, they will be informed that they are either ineligible or inadmissible to Canada under the relevant provisions of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)*. If one member of the refugee family is inadmissible, the whole family will be inadmissible. If a private sponsorship application or a refugee's application for permanent residence is refused, there may be grounds to (1) request reconsideration; or (2) judicially review the decision in court. In Visa Office-Referred programs, refugees have already satisfied eligibility and admissibility criteria by the time a match is made with a private sponsoring group in Canada.

DETAIL

Refugees identified for resettlement to Canada through a Visa Office-Referred program (see 2.A.2(i)) have already been determined to be eligible and admissible by the time a match is made with a private sponsoring group in Canada (see 2.B.3(i)). For all other private sponsorship streams, if the refugee does not pass the screening, the visa officer will notify the refugee and sponsors that the application has been refused because the refugee is ineligible or inadmissible to Canada. The refusal letter will identify the relevant provision from the *IRPA* (see 2.A.6(i) and 2.A.6(ii)).

Refusals are documented in the Government of Canada's Global Case Management System. In cases of refusal, the visa officer must include notes in the database explaining why he/she refused the application.

If the refugee applicant believes that the visa officer's decision was unreasonable, there may be grounds to:

- **REQUEST RECONSIDERATION:** When a request for reconsideration is made, visa officers are instructed to consider the following factors in making their decision: (1) the passage of time between the refusal and the request for reconsideration; (2) whether principles of natural justice and procedural fairness were followed; (3) whether an administrative error was committed or the visa officer acted outside of his/her jurisdiction; (4) whether new evidence was submitted that affects the assessment; (5) whether there are concerns regarding fraud or misrepresentation; and (6) whether there is a negative decision from Canada's Federal Court on judicial review.
- **JUDICIALLY REVIEW THE DECISION:** The Federal Court of Canada will examine whether the visa officer's process and reasons for refusing the application were reasonable and correct in law. If the court determines that the visa officer's decision was not fair or reasonable, or the officer made an error in law, the court may quash the visa officer's decision and order another visa officer to redetermine (review) the case. A redetermination does not necessarily mean that the new visa officer will come to a different conclusion.

Refugees who do not meet the eligibility criteria for protection in Canada, but who have compelling reasons for why they should nevertheless be granted protection can also request that they be admitted on humanitarian and compassionate grounds pursuant to s. 25 of the *IRPA*. For example, an orphaned child may receive an exemption from Canada's definition of "family" and "dependant" in order to resettle to Canada with his/her caretakers. Sponsors may work with refugees to pursue the above options.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "OP 5 – Overseas Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op05-eng.pdf>

-  IRCC, "Processing PRRA applications: PRRA decisions"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/prra/decisions.asp>

-  IRCC, "Humanitarian and compassionate grounds"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/inside/h-and-c.asp>

-  RSTP, "Responding to a Negative Decision"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Responding-to-a-Negative-Decision-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

A.7 HOW DOES OVERSEAS PROCESSING BY UNHCR WORK?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider how resettlement processing is conducted by UNHCR to provide countries with referrals and what safeguards are in place to ensure an efficient, transparent and predictable resettlement process and to mitigate the risk of fraud and manage expectations of refugees.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What are the preconditions for a refugee to be submitted for resettlement to a country by UNHCR?
- (ii) What are the basic stages in processing resettlement submissions to a country by UNHCR?

RESOURCES

 UNHCR, "Resettlement Handbook"
<http://www.unhcr.org/46f7c0ee2.pdf>

 UNHCR, "Handbook and Guidelines on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status under the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees"
<http://www.unhcr.org/3d58e13b4.pdf>

 UNHCR, "Procedural Standards for Refugee Status Determination under UNHCR's Mandate"
<http://www.unhcr.org/4317223c9.pdf>

(i) WHAT ARE THE PRECONDITIONS FOR A REFUGEE TO BE SUBMITTED FOR RESETTLEMENT TO A COUNTRY BY UNHCR?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

There are three preconditions for refugees to be submitted for resettlement to Canada by UNHCR:

- The individual is determined to be a refugee by UNHCR;
- The prospects for all durable solutions were assessed, and resettlement is identified as the most appropriate solution; and
- The individual falls under one or more of the UNHCR resettlement submission categories.

DETAIL

As a general rule, resettlement is only available to refugees who have a continued need for international protection. It is essential to ensure that each individual referred for resettlement has been determined to be a refugee.

The few exceptions to the precondition of refugee recognition are non-refugee stateless persons, and certain dependent non-refugee family members of refugees.

There are three durable solutions available for refugees: voluntary repatriation; local integration; and resettlement. There is no formal hierarchy among the three durable solutions.

For a refugee to be submitted for resettlement to another country by UNHCR, all three durable solutions should be given full consideration and resettlement must be identified as the most appropriate solution. This requires an individual assessment of each case to establish if voluntary repatriation or local integration can be pursued prior to processing a case of resettlement.

To have their case submitted to a resettlement country, refugees must meet the requirements for submission under one or more of the resettlement submission categories (see 2.A.4(iii)).

RESOURCES

 UNHCR, "Resettlement Handbook"
<http://www.unhcr.org/46f7c0ee2.pdf>

 UNHCR, "Handbook and Guidelines on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status under the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees"
<http://www.unhcr.org/3d58e13b4.pdf>

(ii) WHAT ARE THE BASIC STAGES IN PROCESSING RESETTLEMENT SUBMISSIONS TO A COUNTRY BY UNHCR?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Following the identification of refugees in need of resettlement, UNHCR conducts three basic stages in preparing resettlement submissions to Canada: assessing individual resettlement needs; preparing a resettlement submission; and making a submission to a resettlement country.

DETAIL

ASSESSING INDIVIDUAL RESETTLEMENT NEEDS: This involves a file review followed by at least one interview with the refugee and all family members. During the resettlement interview, UNHCR will verify biodata and family composition, review and confirm the refugee claims of all adult family members, and assess and confirm the resettlement needs of all family members.

PREPARING A RESETTLEMENT SUBMISSION

- Based on the resettlement needs assessment, UNHCR may authorize a resettlement submission, which includes a Resettlement Registration Form (RRF) and supporting documentation as appropriate.
- The RRF is the primary tool to represent the needs of refugees to resettlement countries. To ensure quality, RRFs go through a review process before being submitted to resettlement countries.
- In certain situations and in close consultation with resettlement countries, an abridged RRF may also be used to expedite individual case processing when refugees share similar claims and/or resettlement needs. The RRF includes a declaration page signed by the refugee and all adult dependants authorizing UNHCR to share the data with the resettlement country for the purpose of processing.
- For cases submitted under the Medical Needs Category, a Medical Assessment Form (MAF) is attached to the RRF. For cases involving unaccompanied or separated children, families in which there are unresolved custody disputes, married refugee children, or children being resettled with only one parent who does not have legal custody or written consent from the non-accompanying parent, Best Interest Assessment (BIA) or Best Interest Determination (BID) reports are attached to the RRF.

SUBMISSION TO A RESETTLEMENT COUNTRY: In determining the suitable resettlement country for submission, UNHCR considers:

- Family links, particularly those in resettlement States;
- Resettlement submission priority, vulnerability, and the resettlement country's average processing time and capacity for urgent processing;
- Selection criteria and admission priorities of resettlement countries;
- Allocation of annual quotas of resettlement States;
- Health requirements/availability of treatment;
- Language abilities;
- Cultural aspects;

- Nationality;
- Family configuration; and, if possible,
- The refugee's expressed preference for a resettlement country.

RESOURCES

 UNHCR, "Resettlement Handbook"
<http://www.unhcr.org/46f7c0ee2.pdf>

A.8 HOW ARE REFUGEES TRANSPORTED AND HOW ARE DESTINATIONS CHOSEN?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider who arranges and pays for privately sponsored refugees' travel costs and how to select destinations that provide adequate support for successful integration.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What steps are required to arrange transportation, and who is responsible for each step?
- (ii) Who is responsible for covering the costs of transportation?
- (iii) Who is responsible for determining the place of resettlement?

RESOURCES

 IRCC, "Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs (GAR, PSR, BVOR, and RAP)"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/resettlement.asp>

 IRCC, "OP 5 – Overseas Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op05-eng.pdf>

 IRCC, "Destining and travel arrangements"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/processing/travel/index.asp>

 RSTP, "Fact Sheet: Transportation & Admissibility Loans"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Transportation-Admissibility-Loans-Fact-Sheet-6.pdf>

 IRCC, "Evaluation of the Immigration Loan Program"
http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/E6-ILP_Eng.pdf

 IRCC, "Map of destination communities and service provider organizations"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/map.asp>

 IRCC, "The Matching Centre"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2016/01/the-matching-centre.html?=&wbdisable=true>

(i) WHAT STEPS ARE REQUIRED TO ARRANGE TRANSPORTATION, AND WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EACH STEP?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) work together to coordinate travel arrangements. In some cases, Canada may work with other agencies to arrange travel logistics. Arranging travel includes securing travel documentation, exit permits, flight logistics, and reception in Canada.

DETAIL

Canada has contracted IOM to deliver certain services, including:

- In-country transportation (where necessary);
- Pre-departure accommodation (where necessary);
- Obtaining travel documents and exit permits;
- Assisting refugees in completing transportation loans forms;
- Providing refugee transit centre accommodation;
- Giving pre-embarkation flight orientation;
- Making international airline bookings (often at reduced rates);
- Arranging passenger assistance at departure, transit, and arrival airports; and
- Providing operational and/or medical escorts.

Canada may also work with the International Committee for the Red Cross or other agencies to arrange travel documents where necessary.

Canada is responsible for issuing the appropriate documentation to permit entry into Canada. Usually this comes in the form of a permanent resident visa. If the refugee does not have a passport, it may be possible for the refugee to travel using a travel document issued by the International Committee for the Red Cross, a UNHCR Provisional Travel Certificate, or a Single Journey Travel Document issued by the Government of Canada.

Once travel arrangements are made, the overseas visa office will send a Notification of Arrival Transmission to the Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa, which in turn notifies sponsors of the refugees' date and time of arrival. Privately sponsored refugees will be welcomed at the airport by their sponsor(s), who will provide assistance with their immediate settlement needs, including temporary accommodation, food, and clothing.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "OP 5 – Overseas Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op05-eng.pdf>

- IRCC, “Destining and travel arrangements”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/processing/travel/index.asp>

- IRCC, “Overseas Processing Manual Chapter 17: Loans”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op17-eng.pdf>

- IOM, “Building Better Futures: Canada and IOM”
<http://publications.iom.int/books/building-better-futures-canada-and-iom>

- IOM, “IOM Resettlement Services in 2015”
[https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/DMM/Migration-Health/IOMResettlementServices\(2015\).pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/DMM/Migration-Health/IOMResettlementServices(2015).pdf)

(ii) WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR COVERING THE COSTS OF TRANSPORTATION?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada offers transportation loans to cover the costs of refugees' transportation. Refugees must begin making payments on their loans shortly after they arrive in Canada.

DETAIL

Article 34 of the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* states that "The Contracting States shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees. They shall in particular make every effort to expedite naturalization proceedings and to reduce as far as possible the charges and costs of such proceedings".

While not required, sponsoring groups may offer to absorb the costs associated with sponsored refugees' travel to Canada. Otherwise, sponsored refugees may apply for loans with the Government of Canada to cover these costs. The transportation loan includes approved service fees from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as well as other related expenses.

Refugees can apply for transportation loans with the overseas visa office. Eligible expenses include the costs of travel; transportation taxes; approved service fees from IOM; and inland transportation costs.

Repayment on transportation loans should commence thirty days after refugees arrive in Canada. The larger the loan amount, the more time refugees are given to repay the full amount.

Privately sponsored refugees have a grace period from interest on the loan for one to three years depending on the size of the loan.

RESOURCES

- 🔗 RSTP, "Fact Sheet: Transportation & Admissibility Loans"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Transportation-Admissibility-Loans-Fact-Sheet-6.pdf>
- 🔗 IRCC, "Overseas Processing Manual Chapter 17: Loans"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op17-eng.pdf>
- 🔗 Settlement.org, "How do I repay my travel loan if I am a refugee or protected person?"
<http://settlement.org/ontario/immigration-citizenship/refugees/after-you-arrive/how-do-i-repay-my-travel-loan-if-i-am-a-refugee-or-protected-person/>
- 🔗 IRCC, "Financial help – Refugees"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/resettle-assist.asp>

(iii) WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DETERMINING THE PLACE OF RESETTLEMENT?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Privately sponsored refugees resettle in the same communities that their sponsors live in. When cases are referred for resettlement to Canada by UNHCR or another referral agency, and Canada earmarks them for private sponsorship through a Visa Office-Referred program, Canada will provide any relevant details to sponsors that could impact the place of resettlement, or the sponsors' ability to effectively provide settlement services.

DETAIL

Part of the sponsorship application involves sponsors demonstrating that they are aware of the necessary settlement supports and services in their community. Canada will assess availability of appropriate supports as part of its determination of sponsor eligibility. These include:

- Psycho-social supports;
- Health care;
- Language training;
- Employment opportunities; and
- The presence of family members.

When cases are referred for resettlement to Canada by UNHCR or another referral agency, and Canada earmarks them for private sponsorship through the Visa Office-Referred (VOR) program; Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program, or Joint Assistance (JAS) program (see 2.B.3(i)), Canada will provide information to potential sponsors to help them determine whether they will be able to provide necessary settlement supports to referred refugees. These notes can include:

- Existing links to family or friends in Canada;
- Preferences with respect to the size of the host community or employment (e.g. individuals more comfortable in smaller rural communities);
- Any special needs or services required;
- Family size; and,
- Sexual orientation or gender identity.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "OP 5 – Overseas Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op05-eng.pdf>

 IRCC, "Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/index.asp>

 IRCC, "Syrian Refugees Destination Communities"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2015/12/syrian-refugees-destination-communities.html>

2.B SPONSORS: FROM MOBILIZATION TO ENGAGEMENT

ACTORS MAY CONSIDER:

- B.1 How can private actors be mobilized to support refugee resettlement?
- B.2 What other options to support refugees are available to private actors?
- B.3 Who is eligible to sponsor and what is their relationship to government?
- B.4 How are eligible sponsors screened?
- B.5 What are sponsors' responsibilities?
- B.6 What steps do sponsors need to take to prepare for the refugees' arrival?
- B.7 What training and resources are available to sponsors prior to and after refugees' arrival?

B.1 HOW CAN PRIVATE ACTORS BE MOBILIZED TO SUPPORT REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

The success of a private sponsorship program hinges in part on mobilizing and engaging private actors to sponsor and integrate refugees into society.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What actors are needed to promote community mobilization in support of refugees?
- (ii) How can xenophobia and apprehensions regarding security be alleviated?
- (iii) What tools are available to engage communities in privately sponsoring refugees?
- (iv) What supports are available to maintain community interest and engagement?

RESOURCES

-  Canadian Council for Refugees, “Refugees Welcome Here: Toolkit Resources”
<http://ccrweb.ca/en/rwh-toolbox>
-  IRCC, “How to Protect the Resettlement Mechanisms from abuse by terrorists and other international criminals without unduly impeding resettlement as a tool of protection”
<http://www.unhcr.org/3cfb8a436.pdf>
-  Andrea Janus, “I’m so proud to be here’: Syrian refugee has tearful reunion with Justin Trudeau” (CBC News, 5 December 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/programs/metromorning/metro-morning-justin-trudeau-refugee-reunion-1.3880485>
-  RSTP, “Settlement Experiences of Iraqi Refugees”
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/settlement-experiences-of-iraqi-refugees/>
-  Michael Friscolanti, “Saving Family No. 417” (MacLeans, 13 January 2016)
<http://www.macleans.ca/saving-family-no-417/>
-  MCC, “The Power of Partnership”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNv2C5kevCE>
-  RSTP, “Refugee Sponsorship and Expectations: Sponsor and Refugee Perspectives”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvWbp_d5ivU

-  Giovanna Roma, "The Indochinese Refugee Movement: An Exploratory Case Study of the Windsor Experience" (Refuge, 2016)
<http://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/40261>

-  Today in Ottawa's History, "Project 4000"
<https://todayinottawashistory.wordpress.com/2014/10/03/project-4000/>

-  CBC, "Former Vietnamese refugee pays it forward"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvjGFq1unAk>

(i) WHAT ACTORS ARE NEEDED TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION IN SUPPORT OF REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Various actors are needed to promote community mobilization in support of refugees, including government, media, community leaders/champions, civil society/advocacy organizations, public and private institutions, and individual citizens/new sponsors.

DETAIL

Private sponsorship is truly a public-private partnership that depends on various actors working together to welcome refugees and help them integrate into life in Canada. Each actor plays an important role in mobilizing communities to support refugees through private sponsorship, including:

- **GOVERNMENT:** Private sponsorship cannot occur without the government implementing a legal and regulatory framework to enable mobilized citizens to act in support of refugees. Private sponsorship can only succeed if there is political support to resettle refugees. All levels of government play an important role in mobilizing and providing support.
- **MEDIA:** Media plays an important role in promoting a positive narrative about refugees, increased resettlement of refugees, and impact that private sponsorship has on refugees, sponsors, and society.
- **COMMUNITY LEADERS/CHAMPIONS:** Champions are individuals who are well-respected and trusted in their communities. They encourage others to welcome refugees as private sponsors. Community leaders can include local sponsoring groups, faith organizations, businesses, or prominent individuals, among others.
- **PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS:** Public institutions must ensure that newly arrived refugees are able to access necessary services (e.g. social services, transportation, education, health, etc.) to allow them to succeed in their country of resettlement.
- **INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS/NEW SPONSORS:** Individual citizens with sponsorship experience play an important role in sharing their positive experiences with their communities, encouraging them to privately sponsor refugees, and providing sponsors with advice and support before and after the refugees' arrival. As new sponsors prepare for the arrival of sponsored refugees, their excitement and enthusiasm for welcoming a new family to Canada may influence others to learn about sponsorship and get involved themselves.

RESOURCES

 Naomi Alboim, "Lessons learned from the Indochinese and Syrian refugee movements" (Policy Options, 2016)
<http://policyoptions.irpp.org/fr/magazines/mai-2016/lessons-learned-from-the-indochinese-and-syrian-refugee-movements/>

 Andrea Janus, "'I'm so proud to be here': Syrian refugee has tearful reunion with Justin Trudeau" (CBC News, 5 December 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/programs/metromorning/metro-morning-justin-trudeau-refugee-reunion-1.3880485>

-  RSTP, "Settlement Experiences of Iraqi Refugees"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/settlement-experiences-of-iraqi-refugees/>

-  Michael Friscolanti, "Saving Family No. 417" (MacLeans, 13 January 2016)
<http://www.macleans.ca/saving-family-no-417/>

-  MCC, "The Power of Partnership"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNv2C5kevCE>

-  RSTP, "Refugee Sponsorship and Expectations: Sponsor and Refugee Perspectives"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvWbp_d5ivU

-  Giovanna Roma, "The Indochinese Refugee Movement: An Exploratory Case Study of the Windsor Experience" (Refuge, 2016)
<http://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/40261>

-  Today in Ottawa's History, "Project 4000"
<https://todayinottawashistory.wordpress.com/2014/10/03/project-4000/>

-  CBC, "Former Vietnamese refugee pays it forward"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvjGFq1unAk>

(ii) HOW CAN XENOPHOBIA AND APPREHENSIONS REGARDING SECURITY BE ALLEVIATED?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The involvement of community in private sponsorship itself decreases apprehensions regarding the “other.” When people are in direct contact with refugees and start learning about the challenges the latter face, they are better able to relate and become more engaged in resettlement efforts. Media and government actors can explain the medical and security screening procedures that refugees must go through prior to arrival in their country of resettlement. Government leadership in this regard is essential to ensure the public can obtain information on how security screening is performed, regular monitoring and review of screening procedures is performed, and linkages are formed with the broadest set of security partners possible to ensure the most accurate and up to date information is available.

DETAIL

“Canada has always been a country where we are able to adjust and accommodate, where we leave people to be themselves. We must let people wear what they want to wear. We must always be the kind of society that understands that other people have brought different stories and different narratives to this place. We must respect their stories as we ask them to respect ours.” - Adrienne Clarkson, 26th Governor General of Canada

A significant benefit of the community sponsorship model is the direct interaction between communities and refugees in helping the refugees adjust to life in their country of resettlement. Through this engagement, citizens are better able to understand the refugees’ past experiences and present resettlement challenges. Private sponsorship promotes understanding and tolerance because it enables citizens to better relate to the experience of individuals with different cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. This direct engagement and learning itself reduces xenophobia and security concerns because it increases understanding of not only the differences across cultures, but also the similarities in every human experience.

Positive stories about the private sponsorship experience in the media are important because they highlight the importance of providing a safe haven to refugees, the contributions that refugees can make to a society, and the life-changing impact that private sponsorship has on citizens and society.

It is also important for governments and media to clearly communicate the broad societal benefits of and humanitarian obligations associated with refugee resettlement, as well as the extensive screening processes that refugees go through prior to arrival to demonstrate that refugees do not pose a threat to the security of their country of resettlement. For example, the heads of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Security Intelligence Establishment publicly backed the Government of Canada’s plan to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees in late 2015 and early 2016, giving assurances that the screening procedures in place are rigorous. UNHCR and Canada have robust screening mechanisms to ensure that no person who is inadmissible to Canada for reasons of national security, serious criminality, or who poses a threat to public safety is accepted for resettlement. For more information about overseas screening, see 2.A.6 and 2.A.7.

The Government of Canada also works in close collaboration with its international allies to ensure that they understand Canada’s rigorous procedures.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "How to Protect the Resettlement Mechanisms from abuse by terrorists and other international criminals without unduly impeding resettlement as a tool of protection"
<http://www.unhcr.org/3cfb8a436.pdf>
-  Jodi Kantor and Catrin Einhorn, "Refugees Encounter a Foreign Word: Welcome" (New York Times, 30 June 2016)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/01/world/americas/canada-syrian-refugees.html?mtrref=undefined&gwh=5F31801B80D2A765BECACE4E892A1870&gwt=pay>
-  Adrienne Clarkson, "We must remember that Canadians are not immune to racism" (Globe and Mail, 31 January 2017)
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/we-must-remember-that-canadians-are-not-immune-from-racism/article33852998/>
-  Ian MacLeod, "No change to refugee security screening, immigration official says" (Ottawa Citizen, 24 November 2015)
<http://ottawacitizen.com/news/politics/no-change-to-refugee-security-screening-immigration-official-says>
-  Marlene Leung, "Canadians shouldn't fret over refugee security concerns: expert" (CTV News, 16 November 2015)
<http://www.ctvnews.ca/canadians-shouldn-t-fret-over-refugee-security-concerns-expert-1.2660279>
-  Daniel Leblanc and Jane Taber, "RCMP, CSIS support Trudeau's plan to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees" (The Globe and Mail, 18 November 2015)
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/rcmp-csis-support-trudeaus-plan-to-resettle-25000-syrian-refugees/article27342588/>

(iii) WHAT TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE TO ENGAGE COMMUNITIES IN PRIVATELY SPONSORING REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

A wide variety of tools are available to promote community mobilization to welcome refugees such as: sharing success stories; finding champions; toolkits, and targeted advice.

DETAIL

A wide variety of tools are available to promote community mobilization to welcome refugees such as:

SHARING SUCCESS STORIES AND EXPERIENCES about refugee resettlement from the perspectives of the sponsors, the refugees, and the communities who welcome refugees.

FINDING CHAMPIONS: Champions are those who support and promote refugee resettlement in Canada. Champions can be public figures and they can be ordinary individuals who are passionate about enlarging Canada's role in refugee resettlement. It is important the champions are credible and respected and represent a variety of sectors including the business/private sector. A well-known example is Marion Dewar, former Mayor of Ottawa, who launched Project 4000, engaging Ottawa residents to privately sponsor an additional 4,000 Vietnamese refugees to Ottawa.

Many **TOOLKITS** have been produced to help communities support refugees. Examples include the Refugees Welcome Here Toolbox (Canadian Council for Refugees); and Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Toolkit (Alberta Urban Municipalities Association).

TARGETED ADVICE on key issues affecting refugees, e.g., caring for the health of a newly arrived Syrian refugee family and supporting children with refugee experience helps increase positive integration outcomes.

SOCIAL MEDIA is also an important tool to spread information and positive stories about sponsorship of refugees. Social media has also become a critical tool for refugees to communicate with each other and access information regarding the sponsorship and resettlement process.

RESOURCES

-  Naomi Alboim, "Lessons learned from the Indochinese and Syrian refugee movements" (Policy Options, 2016)
<http://policyoptions.irpp.org/fr/magazines/mai-2016/lessons-learned-from-the-indochinese-and-syrian-refugee-movements/>

-  Canadian Council for Refugees, "Refugees Welcome Here: Toolkit Resources"
<http://ccrweb.ca/en/rwh-toolbox>

-  Andrea Janus, "'I'm so proud to be here': Syrian refugee has tearful reunion with Justin Trudeau" (CBC News, 5 December 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/programs/metromorning/metro-morning-justin-trudeau-refugee-reunion-1.3880485>

-  Stephanie Levitz, "Social media a vital lifeline for Canada's Syrian Refugees: report" (Global News, 21 April 2017)
<http://globalnews.ca/news/3395784/syrian-refugees-canada-report/>

-  RSTP, "Settlement Experiences of Iraqi Refugees"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/settlement-experiences-of-iraqi-refugees/>

-  Michael Friscolanti, "Saving Family No. 417" (MacLeans, 13 January 2016)
<http://www.macleans.ca/saving-family-no-417/>

-  MCC, "The Power of Partnership"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNv2C5kevCE>

-  RSTP, "Refugee Sponsorship and Expectations: Sponsor and Refugee Perspectives"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvWbp_d5ivU

-  Giovanna Roma, "The Indochinese Refugee Movement: An Exploratory Case Study of the Windsor Experience" (Refuge, 2016)
<http://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/40261>

-  Today in Ottawa's History, "Project 4000"
<https://todayinottawashistory.wordpress.com/2014/10/03/project-4000/>

-  CBC, "Former Vietnamese refugee pays it forward"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvjGFq1unAk>

-  Amnesty International, "Canada: Canadian Refugee Champions"
<https://www.amnesty.ca/our-work/issues/refugees-and-migrants/canadian-refugee-champions>

-  AMSC - Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, "Welcoming and Inclusive Communities toolkit"
<https://auma.ca/advocacy-services/programs-initiatives/welcoming-and-inclusive-communities/tools-resources/toolkits>

-  Kevin Pottie, Christina Greenaway, Ghayda Hassan, Charles Hui, Laurence Kirmayer, "Caring for a newly arrived Syrian refugee family" (Canadian Medical Association Journal, 2015)
<http://www.cmaj.ca/site/misc/caring-for-a-newly-arrived-syrian-refugee-family-cmaj.151422.xhtml>

-  Surrey Welcoming Communities Project, "Resource Guide for Supporting Children with Refugee Experience"
https://www.surrey.ca/files/Resource_Guide_-_Supporting_Children_with_Refugee_Experience.pdf

(iv) WHAT SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE TO MAINTAIN COMMUNITY INTEREST AND ENGAGEMENT?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Communities may feel more encouraged to sponsor refugees knowing that there are experienced support networks in place they can turn to (see 2.B.1(i)). For example, Canada funds the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) to support Canadian sponsors and individuals interested in private sponsorship through regular public education workshops. RSTP trainers are available to help sponsors navigate challenges before and during the sponsorship undertaking period to ensure refugees integrate successfully. A network of settlement agencies employs experienced settlement counsellors who not only help refugees integrate into Canadian society, but can also counsel sponsors on how to help refugees access these services.

Further, advocacy organizations often engage in public information and awareness campaigns to encourage ongoing engagement in private sponsorship and support for increased refugee resettlement. Many organizations have also sprung up organically to fill support needs where required.

Finally, individuals who already have sponsorship experience are often the most powerful advocates for private sponsorship, as they are able to share their deeply personal and life-changing experiences of sponsorship with their communities and encourage others to take part in the program.

DETAIL

Communities may feel more encouraged or less overwhelmed to sponsor refugees if they are aware of the support systems in place. Canada funds the RSTP to facilitate regular workshops across the country to educate Canadians about Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees program. The workshops range in topics from "What is sponsorship/How can you sponsor a refugee?" to guidance on completing the application forms, sponsorship ethics, and settlement and integration. RSTP trainers provide ongoing support over the phone or via email to Canadians navigating the sponsorship process or encountering challenges once refugees arrive. RSTP is a vital resource to ensure that Canadians are informed and sponsors feel fully supported as they help a new family adjust to life in Canada.

Numerous advocacy organizations also often engage in public information and awareness campaigns to encourage ongoing participation in private sponsorship and support for refugee resettlement. "Refugees Welcome Here!" is an example of a recent public awareness campaign launched in January 2016 by Amnesty International and the Canadian Council for Refugees. The campaign is designed to encourage Canadians to welcome more refugees, to achieve more fairness in systems affecting refugees, to foster more welcoming communities across Canada, to debunk myths about refugees, and to emphasize refugees' contributions to society

Many volunteer organizations have also sprung up to fill support needs where required. For example, the Refugee Sponsorship Support Program was founded in October 2016 to mobilize lawyers across Canada to provide pro bono support to sponsors needing help in filling out the sponsorship application forms.

RESOURCES

-  Naomi Alboim, "Lessons learned from the Indochinese and Syrian refugee movements" (Policy Options, 2016)
<http://policyoptions.irpp.org/fr/magazines/mai-2016/lessons-learned-from-the-indochinese-and-syrian-refugee-movements/>

-  Canadian Council for Refugees, "Refugees Welcome Here: Toolkit Resources"
<http://ccrweb.ca/en/rwh-toolbox>

-  RSTP
<http://www.rstp.ca/>

-  RSTP, "Settlement Experiences of Iraqi Refugees"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/settlement-experiences-of-iraqi-refugees/>

-  Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, "Sponsorship Experiences"
<https://youtu.be/J5pFTgmYYKg>

-  Michael Friscolanti, "Saving Family No. 417" (MacLeans, 13 January 2016)
<http://www.macleans.ca/saving-family-no-417/>

-  MCC, "The Power of Partnership"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNv2C5kevCE>

-  IRCC, "Find help to adjust"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/resettle-providers.asp>

-  Amnesty International, "Refugees Welcome Here!"
<https://www.amnesty.ca/node/72323>

-  Refugee Sponsorship Support Program
<http://www.refugeessp.ca/>

B.2 WHAT OTHER OPTIONS TO SUPPORT REFUGEES ARE AVAILABLE TO PRIVATE ACTORS?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

The success of a private sponsorship program hinges in part on the mobilization and engagement of private actors to welcome and support refugee resettlement and integration, but not all individuals are in a position to formally commit to private sponsorship.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What types of activities can individuals engage in to welcome refugees and help them integrate into their communities?

RESOURCES

-  "Local groups want your help to welcome Syrian refugees" (CTV News Montreal, 23 November 2015)
<http://montreal.ctvnews.ca/local-groups-want-your-help-to-welcome-syrian-refugees-1.2671318>
-  Refugee 613, "Volunteer"
<http://www.refugee613.ca/pages/volunteer>
-  Spark Ontario
<http://www.findmyspark.ca/warmwelcome>
-  Volunteer Toronto, "How You Can Help Refugees In Toronto"
<http://www.volunteertoronto.ca/page/HelpingRefugees>
-  Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia
<http://www.isans.ca/volunteer-community/volunteer-with-us/>
-  OCISO
<https://ociso.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Friends-of-the-Family-Page-1-pager.pdf>
-  United Way
<http://www.unitedway.ca/blog/united-for-refugees/>
-  Immigration, Diversite, et Inclusion Quebec, "Partner organizations of the Ministere"
<http://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/informations/reception-syrian-refugees/organizations-integration.html>

(i) WHAT TYPES OF ACTIVITIES CAN INDIVIDUALS ENGAGE IN TO WELCOME REFUGEES AND HELP THEM INTEGRATE INTO THEIR COMMUNITIES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Individuals may be able to undertake sponsorship-type responsibilities at varying degrees with established sponsoring groups. Some individuals may not have the financial or settlement capacity to directly sponsor a refugee family, but wish to support and welcome refugees once they arrive.

Many community organizations that engage in welcoming and supporting refugees have established programs to match community members (e.g. volunteers) with newly arrived refugees to provide them with friendship, emotional support, and orientation to life in Canada. This type of support helps newcomers make connections in the community and helps them build social capital. These targeted matching programs may also be offered in schools or workplaces, so refugees have someone to turn to for advice, assistance, or information on life in their new communities. Targeted matching is offered under the Community Connections Stream of Canada's Settlement Program and is available in many municipalities across Canada.

In addition to providing direct, in-person support to refugees by volunteering, individuals may also wish to hold charity drives to collect food, clothing, and other items for newly arrived refugees. Many individuals may also provide monetary donations to organizations and groups supporting or sponsoring refugees.

DETAIL

The Community Connections stream of Canada's Settlement Program aims to build bridges between newcomers and host communities. Projects funded through this stream support newcomers in making connections and forming networks within Canadian society while also engaging communities to welcome newcomers and support their full participation. This approach allows newcomers to develop a sense of belonging while enabling institutions and community members to better understand the contributions of newcomers and the challenges they face.

Committed engagement from community members also helps to ease feelings of isolation, promotes a sense of belonging, and enables newcomers to build social capital. Many of the direct services once offered under the previously separate HOST Program are the core activities of Community Connections. These services are based on local contexts and needs in three main areas:

- **SETTLEMENT SUPPORT IN PUBLIC SPACES** (e.g. schools, libraries)
- **COMMUNITY-BASED GROUP EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES** (e.g. sports events)
- **TARGETED MATCHING, NETWORKING AND WORKSHOP** (e.g. matching based on common interests, conversation circles, and homework clubs).

Non-government groups organize initiatives to match Canadian volunteers with resettled refugees. For example, former volunteers of Matthew House in Toronto initiated a "Buddy-Up Program" to foster connections between refugees and community volunteers. When considering starting up a similar program, organizations must ensure they have capacity to recruit, screen/select, match, and monitor volunteers. One challenge in Canada has been the stretched capacity of the settlement sector to respond to the volume of people wanting to volunteer directly with refugees.

RESOURCES

-  Refugee 613, "Volunteer"
<http://www.refugee613.ca/pages/volunteer>

-  IRCC, "Evaluation of the Host Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/host-program/section3.asp>

-  Immigrant Services Society of BC, How Can I Help Refugees in Vancouver?
<http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/syrian-refugee-crisis-what-can-i-do-fact-sheet.pdf>

-  BuddyUp TO, "About BuddyUp"
<http://www.buddyupto.ca/>

-  IRCC, "Community Connections"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/community-connections.asp>

-  Catholic Centre for Immigrants, "Community Connections"
<http://cciottawa.ca/programs-services/community-connections/>

B.3 WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO SPONSOR AND WHAT IS THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO GOVERNMENT?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider the requirements for sponsorship and sponsors' responsibilities.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) How are sponsors matched to refugees?

- (ii) What are the types of eligible sponsor groups (individuals, organizations, community groups, businesses, etc.)?

- (iii) What criteria do organizations need to meet before entering into sponsorship agreements with the government? What safeguards are in place for newly-approved organizations?

- (iv) How many members are required in a sponsoring group?

- (v) What is the financial capacity of the sponsoring group members individually and collectively and how is their financial capacity determined?

- (vi) What is the settlement capacity of the sponsoring group members individually and how is their settlement capacity determined?

- (vii) What are the criteria concerning the place of residence of the group members vis-à-vis intended place of residence of the resettled refugees?

- (viii) What is the date on which the sponsoring group's undertaking takes effect?

- (ix) For what reasons may a sponsoring group or individual member be ineligible to sponsor?

RESOURCES

- 🔗 IRCC, "Determine your eligibility – Groups of five"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/groups-who.asp>

- 🔗 IRCC, "Determine your eligibility – Community sponsors"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/community-who.asp>

- 🔗 IRCC, "Determine your eligibility – Sponsorship Agreement Holders"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/sah-who.asp>

- 🔗 RSTP, "Self-Assessment Tool for Groups of Five"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/g5assessment/>

-  RSTP, "Sponsorship Agreement Holders"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/sponsorship-agreement-holders/>

-  RSTP, "Becoming a Sponsorship Agreement Holder"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/becomingsah2014.pdf>

-  RSTP, "Groups of Five"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/groups-of-five/>

-  RSTP, "Group Eligibility"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/groups-of-five/1-group-eligibility/>

-  RSTP, "Forming a Group"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/groups-of-five/2-forming-a-group/>

-  RSTP, "Financial Requirements"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/groups-of-five/3-financial-requirements/>

-  RSTP, "Community Sponsors"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/community-sponsors/>

-  RSTP, "Sponsoring Refugees Through a Group of Five"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/sponsoring-refugees-through-a-group-of-five/>

-  RSTP, "Becoming a Community Sponsor"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/becoming-a-community-sponsor-webinar-dec-15-2015-2/>

(i) HOW ARE SPONSORS MATCHED TO REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsors are matched to refugees either by (a) nominating specific refugees they know for sponsorship (“sponsor-referred” or “named” sponsorships); or (b) by selecting refugees to sponsor from a list provided by Canada. Canada matches some of the refugees referred for resettlement by UNHCR through its Visa Office-Referred (VOR); Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR); and Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) programs.

DETAIL

Canada receives referrals of refugees identified for resettlement by UNHCR. Out of these refugees, many are resettled directly by Canada. A large number, however, are selected by overseas visa officers to be matched with private sponsors in Canada who will provide them with support. These are known as **VISA OFFICE-REFERRED** sponsorships. There are two types of Visa Office-Referred sponsorships:

- **Visa Office-Referred (VOR)** sponsorships where the private sponsor is responsible for full financial and settlement support during the sponsorship period;
- **Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR)** sponsorships where the government and the private sponsor share the financial costs of sponsorship but the private sponsor is responsible for settlement support; and

In addition, in **Joint Assistance Sponsorships (JAS)** for government-assisted refugees with special needs (e.g. victims of trauma or torture, particular medical conditions, exceptionally large families), the government provides full financial support throughout the sponsorship period (normally two years) and the private sponsor is responsible for providing settlement support.

In Canada, the matching process is administered by the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP). Visa officers provide case information of refugees identified for Visa-Office referred sponsorships to the RSTP. The RSTP creates profiles that are posted in an online database. Groups of Five (G5s) and Community Sponsors (CSs) must register with the RSTP in order to participate in the matching program. The registration process includes filling out a form and participating in an orientation and training webinar. Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH) and Constituent Groups (CG) are automatically registered to receive Visa Office-Referred refugee profiles. These profiles contain limited personal information to protect the privacy of the refugees but enough information that sponsors can determine if they wish to be matched. This information may include the size of the family, family composition (e.g. ages and gender of family members), nationality, any preferred destination in Canada, and any special needs (e.g. medical needs).

When refugee profiles are available, RSTP notifies all SAHs and registered G5s and CSs, who can access a database and view the profiles. Each profile is available to all sponsoring groups for three weeks. If a sponsoring group is interested in sponsoring a refugee family on the list, they will request that the RSTP place a hold on the profile. Once a hold is placed on the profile, the RSTP sends the sponsoring group an expanded profile with more details about the refugee family. The sponsoring group has three days to inform the RSTP of its decision to move forward with the sponsorship.

Once a match is made, the RSTP informs the Government of Canada that the sponsorship will proceed. Sponsors have six weeks from the date the profile is first referred to RSTP to submit their sponsorship application forms. Canada processes the sponsorship forms to ensure the sponsors meet the financial and settlement criteria to sponsor. Because the refugees have been pre-selected for the matching program, they do not need to submit separate resettlement application forms as part of the sponsorship application. If sponsors do not follow through with

the sponsorship within the three weeks the profiles are available, or the three week period passes, Canada will proceed with resettling the refugees through the Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR) program.

RESOURCES

- IRCC, “Blended Visa Office-Referred Program – Sponsoring Refugees”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/vor.asp>

- RSTP, “Sponsoring Refugees through the Blended Visa Office-Referred (VOR) Program”
http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/G5-and-CS-BVOR-Info-Sheet_May-2016.pdf

(ii) WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF ELIGIBLE SPONSOR GROUPS (INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, COMMUNITY GROUPS, BUSINESSES, ETC.)?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Individuals and groups can sponsor refugees to Canada by forming one of three types of eligible sponsoring groups: Sponsorship Agreement Holders, Groups of Five, and Community Sponsors. Sponsoring groups commit to providing financial, emotional, and settlement support to sponsored refugees during their first twelve months in Canada. Often, refugees have family members in Canada who organize sponsoring groups and undertake many of the resettlement responsibilities. It is also common for diaspora and co-ethnic organizations to organize to sponsor particular populations of refugees by forming sponsoring groups.

DETAIL

SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT HOLDERS (SAHs): Incorporated organizations that sign a sponsorship agreement with the Government of Canada. Most SAHs are faith-based, ethno cultural or humanitarian organizations. Because these are experienced partners with whom the Government of Canada has established a trusted relationship, certain application requirements are waived for these groups. SAHs, which may be local, regional or national, assume overall responsibility for the management of sponsorships under their agreement and accept financial liability for the sponsorship. There are about 110 SAHs across Canada of various sizes. Large SAHs sponsor hundreds of refugees annually while small SAHs might only sponsor half a dozen. The government places limits on the total number of individuals SAHs are permitted to apply to sponsor annually. Large SAHs typically sponsor refugees through subordinate groups, known as Constituent Groups and/or in conjunction with co-sponsors.

- **CONSTITUENT GROUPS (CGs):** Groups which SAHs can authorize to sponsor refugees under their sponsorship agreement. Each SAH sets its own criteria for working with CGs. CGs must have their sponsorship application and settlement plan approved by their SAH before the undertaking is submitted to the Government of Canada. The SAH is responsible for ensuring that its CGs meet their financial and settlement obligations.

GROUPS OF FIVE (G5s): Five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents, who are at least eighteen years of age, live in the expected community of settlement and have collectively arranged for the sponsorship of a refugee. The five individuals act as guarantors that the necessary support will be provided for the full duration of the sponsorship. The Government of Canada assesses individual contributions of group members to the sponsorship. The financial and non-financial aspects are considered collectively, as well as the Settlement Plan, before the Government of Canada concludes the G5 is eligible to sponsor.

COMMUNITY SPONSORS (CSs): Any organization (for-profit/not-for-profit, incorporated/non-incorporated) located in the community where the refugees are expected to settle can make an organizational commitment to sponsor. CSs must undergo financial and settlement plan assessments by the Government of Canada of each time they wish to sponsor. Like G5s, CSs must demonstrate that the organization is willing and able to commit funds toward the sponsorship. Community Sponsors can partner with co-sponsors (see below) to sponsor refugees.

CO-SPONSORS: A SAH or Community Sponsor can partner with individuals or organizations called co-sponsors. Co-sponsors share responsibility for the sponsorship undertaking. Typically, co-sponsors are Canadian friends or family members of the sponsored refugees.

Groups of Five and Community Sponsors may only sponsor refugees who have previously acquired valid proof of refugee status from UNHCR or their host State (see 2.A.4(ii)).

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Application Guide (IMM 5413)"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/5413ETOC.asp>

-  IRCC, "Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/index.asp>

-  IRCC, "Providing timely protection for privately sponsored refugees"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/laws-policy/protect-psr.asp>

(iii) WHAT CRITERIA DO ORGANIZATIONS NEED TO MEET BEFORE ENTERING INTO SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENTS WITH THE GOVERNMENT? WHAT SAFEGUARDS ARE IN PLACE FOR NEWLY-APPROVED ORGANIZATIONS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

To register as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH), organizations must be incorporated (a legally created organization). They must also sign a sponsorship agreement with the Government of Canada.

Generally, new SAH applicants have sponsorship experience and are expected to sponsor multiple refugee cases each year if approved. Applicant organizations must have personnel and finances available to ensure the settlement needs of the sponsored refugees are in place before their arrival. They must also fill out the *Sponsor Assessment* form, which provides information to determine whether the SAH applicant meets sponsorship eligibility requirements.

The Government of Canada requires SAHs to submit a new Sponsor Assessment form every two years to review their sponsorship eligibility. If new SAHs need support, they may join the Canadian Refugee SAH Association, a national membership association of SAHs in Canada which aims to enhance cohesion within the SAH community by providing a forum for sharing ideas, establishing a means of communication, and consultation among members. They may also turn to nationwide organizations like the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program or local organizations like Refugee 613 for assistance.

DETAIL

SAH applicants must be legally created incorporations, which are governed by provincial laws. Applicant organizations are required to provide a copy of their articles of incorporation, the name and contact information of each member of the Board of Directors as well as each person who has signing authority. Once approved, SAHs and their Constituent Groups must include a Settlement Plan with all sponsorship undertakings for the first two years from the date their first SAH agreement was approved and signed. All persons requiring signing authority under the SAH agreement are required to complete a *Sponsor Assessment* form to verify sponsorship eligibility. Those with signing authority sign the sponsorship agreement with the Government of Canada.

RESOURCES

- 🌐 IRCC, “Apply – Sponsorship Agreement Holders”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/sah-how.asp>
- 🌐 Canadian Refugee Sponsorship Agreement Holder Association, “Membership”
<http://www.sahassociation.com/membership/>
- 🌐 Ontario, “Rules for non-for-profit and charitable corporations”
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/rules-not-profit-and-charitable-corporations>
- 📄 IRCC, “Sponsor Assessment”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5492E.pdf>

(iv) HOW MANY MEMBERS ARE REQUIRED IN A SPONSORING GROUP?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

To be eligible to sponsor in Canada, groups must generally be composed of at least five members or one or more individuals may partner with an organization. However, many sponsoring groups are much larger than just five members (e.g. an entire church parish).

DETAIL

The purpose of requiring a base number of individuals to form a sponsoring group is to ensure the group's ability to provide sufficient financial, social, and emotional support to refugees upon arrival.

Canada's *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations* define sponsoring groups in two ways:

- Five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents, each of whom is at least eighteen years old, acting together to sponsor a Convention refugee or a person in similar circumstances; or
- One or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents, each of whom is at least eighteen years old, and a corporation, unincorporated organization, or association acting together to sponsor a Convention refugee or person in similar circumstances.

Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) determine their own criteria for recognizing Constituent Groups (CGs) and/or co-sponsors to sponsor refugees under their agreements. Even though SAHs are responsible for ensuring that CGs have settlement and financial capacity to sponsor, SAHs retain ultimate liability for the sponsorship.

RESOURCES

 RSTP, "Handbook for Sponsoring Groups"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/hand-book-for-sponsoring-groups/>

 IRCC, "Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/index.asp>

(v) WHAT IS THE FINANCIAL CAPACITY OF THE SPONSORING GROUP MEMBERS INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY AND HOW IS THEIR FINANCIAL CAPACITY DETERMINED?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Generally, sponsors must demonstrate to the Government of Canada that they collectively possess the financial capacity to support the sponsored refugee family for their first year in Canada. Group of Five members must provide personal financial information as part of the sponsorship application. Sponsoring organizations (Community Sponsors) must show evidence of their organizational finances. All of these documents are carefully examined by the Government of Canada to determine whether sponsoring groups and their members are eligible to sponsor refugees.

DETAIL

Canada produces a Sponsorship Cost Table, which sets out the base minimum financial commitment sponsors need to make based on the size of the refugee family being sponsored. The Sponsorship Cost Table reflects prevailing provincial social assistance rates. These amounts may be reduced by contributing in-kind donations as outlined in the Government of Canada's In-Kind Donations Table.

Each member of a **GROUP OF FIVE** must fill out a Financial Assessment form and provide either proof of income (e.g. tax assessments, pay stubs, employment letter); or proof of funds held in trust (a bank letter attesting to the account details).

COMMUNITY SPONSORS must show proof of income by providing audited financial statements; a bank letter attesting to the organization's account details; an original letter guaranteeing a cash donation; or proof of alternate sources of funding. Community Sponsors can also show proof of funds held in trust by providing a bank letter attesting to the details of the account opened for the sponsored refugees

SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT HOLDERS (SAHs) do not need to prove financial capacity to sponsor with every sponsorship undertaking due to their agreement with the Government of Canada. The SAH may select and authorize a **CONSTITUENT GROUP** or a **CO-SPONSOR** in the expected community of settlement to jointly enter into a sponsorship commitment with the Government of Canada, by signing the Sponsorship Undertaking form. All parties that sign the Sponsorship Undertaking form are jointly liable to fulfill the sponsorship obligations under the terms of this agreement. However, where the Constituent Group or Co-Sponsor does not assume these responsibilities, the SAH will be held solely responsible for making alternative arrangements.

The SAH will also exercise due diligence in screening volunteers and staff involved with the settlement of refugees. This may include Constituent Groups' relatives, friends, or co-sponsors.

RESOURCES

 IRCC, "Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Application Guide (IMM 5413)"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/5413ETOC.asp>

 RSTP, "Groups of Five"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/groups-of-five/>

- RSTP, "Financial Requirements"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/groups-of-five/3-financial-requirements/>

- RSTP, "The Refugee Sponsorship Application Forms"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/processing/the-refugee-sponsorship-application-forms/>

- IRCC, "Financial Profile Form"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5373BE.pdf>

- RSTP, "Sponsorship Cost Table"
http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Fact_Sheet_7_3_Sponsorship_Cost_Table_Sept2014.pdf

(vi) WHAT IS THE SETTLEMENT CAPACITY OF THE SPONSORING GROUP MEMBERS INDIVIDUALLY AND HOW IS THEIR SETTLEMENT CAPACITY DETERMINED?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Generally, sponsors must demonstrate to the Government of Canada that they collectively possess the settlement capacity to support the sponsored refugee family for their first year in Canada. Sponsors must submit a detailed Settlement Plan, which outlines how they plan to fulfill their responsibilities (see 2.B.5). Canada examines Settlement Plans to determine whether sponsoring groups and their members are eligible to sponsor refugees.

DETAIL

Sponsoring groups must submit a detailed Settlement Plan to the Government of Canada outlining how the group intends to provide settlement assistance, counselling, and support to the resettled refugees during the sponsorship undertaking. Settlement Plans are always required for Groups of Five and Community Sponsors as well as new Sponsorship Agreement Holders and their Constituent Groups during the first two years of their agreement with the Government of Canada. See 2.B.5 for more details about sponsoring groups' responsibilities towards the sponsored refugees.

When assessing settlement capacity, migration officers may consider the following questions:

- Does the sponsor offer a clear plan to orient and support the refugees?
- Are there plans to connect with local settlement agencies?
- Does the sponsoring group have enough time, between all members, to commit to supporting the refugees?
- Is the sponsoring group large enough to accommodate special needs of the refugees?
- Do all members of the sponsoring group plan to contribute to the sponsorship?

RESOURCES

- ❶ Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>
- ❶ SAH Association, "Settlement Work Plan"
http://www.sahassociation.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/D_PSR_Calgary-Settlement-WORK-PLAN-2016-Apr26.docx
- ☑ IRCC, "IMM 5373A – Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5373AE.pdf>
- 📍 RSTP, "Settlement Planning"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/settlement-planning/>
- 📺 RSTP, "Supporting Settlement and Integration"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/supporting-settlement-and-integration-2/>

- 🌐 RSTP, “Your responsibilities”
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/groups-of-five/5-your-responsibilities/>

- 🌐 RSTP, “The Refugee Sponsorship Application Forms”
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/processing/the-refugee-sponsorship-application-forms/>

(vii) WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA CONCERNING THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE OF THE GROUP MEMBERS VIS-À-VIS INTENDED PLACE OF RESIDENCE OF THE RESETTLED REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsoring group members must reside in the refugees' expected community of settlement. Depending on the case, the community of settlement may include the village, town, or surrounding areas in which the refugees may settle. If a migration officer is not satisfied that the sponsor lives close enough to the sponsored refugees to provide adequate, in-person support, sponsoring groups are encouraged to find additional members or representatives in the refugees' expected community of settlement, or risk having the sponsorship application refused.

DETAIL

Sponsoring group members must reside in the refugees' expected community of settlement. Depending on the case, the community of settlement may include the village, town, or surrounding areas in which the refugees may settle.

In determining the community of settlement, the migration officer's paramount consideration should be the sponsor's ability to provide adequate, in-person support to the refugee, taking into account the distance between the sponsor and the refugee. A typical metric is the travelling time by public transit between the refugees' expected place of residence and the sponsors. For example:

- The sponsors live in Toronto, a major urban city, while the refugees will live in Etobicoke, a suburban district approximately fifteen kilometers from downtown Toronto. Given access to public transit in Toronto, both the sponsor and the refugee may be defined as residing in the community of resettlement, depending on travel time and the needs of the refugee.
- As another example, the refugees may be expected to reside in Biggar, Saskatchewan, while the sponsors reside in Rosetown. In this rural situation, Biggar may be considered as "the next town over." The distance between these two towns, sixty kilometres, may be viewed as small. However, any final assessment must take into account whether the time required to travel sixty kilometres poses a barrier to providing adequate, in-person support.

If the migration officer is not satisfied of the residency requirements, sponsoring groups are encouraged to find additional members or representatives in the refugees' expected community of settlement, or risk having the sponsorship application refused.

(viii) WHAT IS THE DATE ON WHICH THE SPONSORING GROUP'S UNDERTAKING TAKES EFFECT?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

A sponsoring group's undertaking takes effect on the date the sponsored refugees arrive in Canada. The undertaking generally lasts twelve months or until the refugees become self-sufficient, whichever comes first.

DETAIL

While sponsors' undertaking formally begins upon the refugees' arrival, sponsors must make adequate preparations for the sponsorship period well before the refugees travel to Canada.

Sponsors are expected to provide financial (see 2.B.3(v)) and settlement support (see 2.B.3(vi) and 2.B.5) for the duration of the sponsorship period. A sponsorship undertaking generally lasts twelve months or until the refugee becomes self-sufficient, whichever happens first.

In special circumstances prior to the refugees' arrival, however, the length of the undertaking can be extended if the migration officer determines the refugee needs more support to become self-sufficient. In these cases, the Government of Canada may ask a sponsoring group to extend the sponsorship period for up to a maximum of thirty six months. The sponsoring group can refuse this request but the case may be cancelled as a result of the refusal (see 2.D.4(i) for more information).

A sponsored refugee is deemed to be financially self-sufficient when their level of income is equivalent to or greater than Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) rates in their community of settlement.

RESOURCES

🔗 RSTP, "Your responsibilities"

<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/groups-of-five/5-your-responsibilities/>

(ix) FOR WHAT REASONS MAY A SPONSORING GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL MEMBER BE INELIGIBLE TO SPONSOR?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

A sponsoring group or group member may be ineligible to sponsor if:

- The sponsoring group does not demonstrate that it meets the financial requirements to sponsor (see 2.B.3(v));
- The sponsoring group does not demonstrate that it has the settlement capacity to sponsor (see 2.B.3(vi));
- The sponsoring group does not have enough members or doesn't meet other eligibility requirements (see 2.B.3(iv));
- The sponsoring group does not have enough members living in the community of settlement (see 2.B.3(vii));
- A sponsor has recently been convicted of a serious crime;
- A sponsor is in detention;
- A sponsor or sponsoring group has defaulted on a previous sponsorship (see 2.D.3) or any court-ordered support payment obligations; or
- A sponsor is at risk of deportation or having his/her citizenship revoked.

DETAIL

A sponsoring group must satisfy Canada that it is eligible (see 2.B.3(ii), 2.B.3(iv)), which includes having the financial (see 2.B.3(v)) and settlement capacity (see 2.B.3(vi)) to sponsor. In addition to meeting basic criteria for forming a group, Groups of Five and Community Sponsors may only sponsor refugees who have previously acquired valid proof of refugee status from UNHCR or their host State.

In addition, the Immigration and *Refugee Protection Regulations* provide that group members are ineligible to sponsor if they have been:

- Convicted in Canada of murder or an offence set out in schedule I or II to the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* and five years have not passed since sentence completion;
- Convicted in another country of an offence synonymous to the above and five years have not elapsed since sentence completion under that country's law;
- In default on a previous sponsorship undertaking (see D.3);
- In default of court-ordered support payments;
- Subject to a removal order;
- Subject to a revocation proceeding under the *Citizenship Act*; or
- Detained in a jail, penitentiary, reformatory or prison.

RESOURCES

-  RSTP, "Group Eligibility"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/groups-of-five/1-group-eligibility/>

-  IRCC, "Sponsor Assessment"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5492E.pdf>

-  Corrections and Conditional Release Act
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-44.6/>

B.4 HOW ARE ELIGIBLE SPONSORS SCREENED?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider proper procedures to verify if groups or individuals qualify to sponsor refugees.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What application forms, if any, must potential sponsors complete?
- (ii) How are application forms and documentation submitted?
- (iii) Who determines if sponsor groups meet eligibility requirements?
- (iv) How is a decision on sponsorship eligibility communicated to potential sponsors?
- (v) Is screening for sponsorship eligibility prioritized for certain sponsorship applications?

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Application for Refugee Sponsorship"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/private.asp>
-  RSTP, "Handbook for Sponsoring Groups: Chapter 6: The Sponsorship Process"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Chapter-6-The-Sponsorship-Process.pdf>
-  RSTP, "All In-Canada Processing FAQ"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/faqs/all-in-canada-processing-faq/>
-  RSTP, "Centralized Processing of Refugee Sponsorship Applications"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/latest-policy-program-update/centralization-of-processing-of-refugee-sponsorship-applications/>

(i) WHAT APPLICATION FORMS, IF ANY, MUST POTENTIAL SPONSORS COMPLETE?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsoring groups must apply to become sponsors by completing Government of Canada application forms corresponding to the type of sponsoring group (Group of Five, Community Sponsor, Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) – see 2.B.3(ii)). Refugee applicants overseas must also complete an application for permanent residence.

DETAIL

Potential sponsoring groups must complete a set of application forms found on the Government of Canada's website. Forms are tailored to the type of sponsoring group (Group of Five, Community Sponsor, SAH – see 2.B.3(ii)), but the application package generally consists of:

- **The Undertaking/Application to Sponsor:** An agreement that formalizes the sponsoring group's legal responsibility to provide financial and settlement assistance for the duration of the sponsorship;
- **Sponsor Assessment:** Collects individual sponsor eligibility information;
- **Financial Assessment:** Collects information related to individual sponsors' financial capacity to sponsor the refugees. SAHs do not need to prove financial capacity because Canada assessed their financial capacity at the time they signed the sponsorship agreement. Note that many SAHs signed their initial agreement in 1979 or 1980 at the time of the Indochinese refugee crisis;
- **Settlement Plan:** Requires sponsoring groups to set out their financial capacity, in-kind donations put towards the sponsorship, and a detailed plan for fulfilling resettlement responsibilities (see 2.B.3(vi));
- **Document Checklist:** Helps sponsors and refugees ensure that all the necessary documentation is in place before submitting the application;
- Group members' photo ID's and proof of income or funds held in trust for the sponsorship.

A complete sponsorship application consists of both a completed sponsorship kit and an application for permanent residence (sometimes also called the "refugee application") completed by the sponsored refugees. Sponsors usually assist the refugee in gathering the information necessary to complete the refugee-side forms of the application package. The application for permanent residence consists of:

- **The Generic Application Form for Canada:** Sets out personal and contact information of the principal applicant and his/her dependants;
- **Schedule A – Background/Declaration:** Collects personal, education, and employment history; and
- **Schedule 2 – Refugees Outside Canada:** Allows refugees to outline their experiences and explain why they meet the criteria for refugee status and resettlement.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Guide 6000 – Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/E16000TOC.asp>

-  IRCC, "Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Application Guide (IMM 5413)"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/5413ETOC.asp>

-  RSTP, "Sponsorship Application Forms"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Chapter-4-Sponsorship-Application-Forms.pdf>

(ii) HOW ARE APPLICATION FORMS AND DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Once a private sponsorship application package is complete (including sponsor and refugee application forms – see 2.B.4(i)), sponsors may submit the package to the Government of Canada via mail or email. Applications are submitted to a centralized processing centre in Canada. Sponsor forms are processed first, and if sponsors meet the eligibility requirements to sponsor, the refugee application forms are sent to the overseas visa office serving the refugees' host state for further processing (see 2.A.2).

DETAIL

Canada uses a centralized processing centre called the “Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa” (ROC-O) to receive and process all applications to privately sponsor refugees.

Sponsorship Agreement Holders' applications are pre-approved whereas for Groups of Five (G5s) and Community Sponsors (CSs), ROC-O first processes the sponsors' forms to determine the sponsoring group's eligibility. If it is determined that the G5 or CS sponsors meet the eligibility criteria (see 2.B.3), ROC-O sends the refugee forms and supporting documentation to the overseas visa office serving the refugees' host state for processing (see 2.A.2).

In addition to processing applications to privately sponsor refugees, ROC-O also, inter alia, processes Visa Office-Referred sponsorships (see 2.B.3(i)) and notifies sponsors of refugees' travel plans.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, “Guide 6000 – Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/E16000TOC.asp>
-  Operational Bulletin 63 – March 21, 2017, “Implementation of the Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/bulletins/2017/ob638.asp>
-  IRCC, “Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Application Guide (IMM 5413)”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/5413ETOC.asp>
-  IRCC, “Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/index.asp>
-  RSTP, “Sponsorship Application Forms”
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Chapter-4-Sponsorship-Application-Forms.pdf>

(iii) WHO DETERMINES IF SPONSOR GROUPS MEET ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

A private sponsoring group and refugee applying for resettlement to Canada each fill out application forms prescribed by the Government of Canada (see 2.B.4(i)). They submit the forms to a centralized processing office in Canada (see 2.B.4(ii)), which, for Groups of Five and Community Sponsors, decides whether the sponsors meet the eligibility requirements for sponsorship and have demonstrated financial and settlement capacity to sponsor (Sponsorship Agreement Holders are pre-approved). If the sponsoring group is approved, the refugee application is sent to the overseas visa office serving the refugees' host state for processing.

DETAIL

Once the Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa (ROC-O) (see 2.B.4(ii)) receives a completed sponsorship application package, it does a preliminary review to ensure that:

- The sponsor(s) is/are eligible to sponsor a refugee;
- The sponsorship undertaking is complete; and
- All required documents have been signed and submitted.

Migration officers at ROC-O are instructed to use the following questions (among others) as guidelines when processing sponsoring group's applications:

- Does the group have the necessary funds or a clear plan of how to raise funds for the sponsorship?
- Does the group have a clear plan to orient and support the applicant throughout the settlement year?
- Does the settlement plan indicate arrangements for: housing; interpreters; settlement services; transportation; health care; education; schooling; dealing with crisis or trauma?

If there are documents missing from the application, ROC-O may either return the application or request that sponsors provide additional information within a specified timeframe. Migration officers may also follow up with questions if there are doubts regarding the sponsoring group's financial or settlement capacity to sponsor. Ultimately, if the migration officer at ROC-O is not persuaded that the sponsoring group is eligible and has financial and settlement capacity to sponsor, the application will be refused.

If the migration officer at ROC-O determines the sponsoring group meets eligibility requirements, the migration officer will create a sponsorship file, which includes an electronic file in Canada's Global Case Management System (GCMS). Once that step is complete, ROC-O will send the refugee application forms to the overseas visa office responsible for applications in the refugees' host state for processing.

(iv) HOW IS A DECISION ON SPONSORSHIP ELIGIBILITY COMMUNICATED TO POTENTIAL SPONSORS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The centralized processing office in Canada will communicate its decision-making process by mail or email with the sponsors at two stages of processing: (1) an Acknowledgment of Receipt letter is sent to sponsors after a preliminary review for completeness and the file is created; and (2) an approval or refusal message is sent once an officer has reviewed the Sponsorship Undertaking and rendered a decision as to whether the application is suitable for submission to the visa office overseas.

DETAIL

Once the Resettlement Operations Centre – Ottawa (ROC-O) determines that the application is complete, a migration officer will open a file and assign it a file number. That number is provided to sponsors in the Acknowledgment of Receipt (AOR) letter and is to be used to track the processing of the sponsorship application. The ROC-O aims to send the AOR letter within thirty business days of receiving a complete application. If applications are incomplete, the processing officer may either return the application or request that sponsors send the missing documentation within a specified time.

Once the file is assigned a number, sponsors can check the status of their application through an online portal called the Electronic Client Application System (E-CAS).

If the sponsoring group's undertaking is approved, ROC-O will transfer the application to the overseas visa office serving the refugee's host state to process the refugees' application. Visa offices update sponsors at two stages of overseas processing: (1) the date of the refugees' interview; and (2) the decision on the refugee's application has been made (if the application is refused, the reasons for refusal will be provided. For more information about overseas processing of refugee applications, see 2.A.2, 2.A.6, and 2.A.7.

RESOURCES

 IRCC, "Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Application Guide (IMM 5413)"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/5413ETOC.asp>

 IRCC, "Communicating with applicants and sponsors"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/communication.asp>

 IRCC, "Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/index.asp>

 IRCC, "Check application processing times"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/EnGLlsh/information/times/index.asp>

 IRCC, "Check your application status"
http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/my_application/status.asp

(v) IS SCREENING FOR SPONSORSHIP ELIGIBILITY PRIORITIZED FOR CERTAIN SPONSORSHIP APPLICATIONS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada generally gives each submitted sponsorship application equal priority whether it comes from a Sponsorship Agreement Holder/Constituent Group, Group of Five, or Community Sponsor. Applications are processed on a “first in, first out” basis. However, in exceptional circumstances and on a case-by-case basis, Canada may expedite processing of certain applications. For example, Canada temporarily expedited the processing of Syrian sponsorship applications in 2015 by adding more processing staff in visa offices in the Middle East in order to meet its target of resettling 25,000 refugees by early 2016.

DETAIL

Refugee sponsorship applications go through two key stages of processing: in-Canada vetting of the complete application package (both the sponsors’ and the refugees’ portions of the application) at the Resettlement Operations Centre – Ottawa; and overseas processing of the refugees’ application for permanent residence by the visa officer in the mission assigned to the refugees’ country of asylum.

All sponsorship applications are generally given equal priority for processing, whether they come from a Sponsorship Agreement Holder/Constituent Group, Group of Five, or Community Sponsor. However, applications submitted by Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) are usually processed more quickly because SAHs have been pre-approved by Canada to privately sponsor refugees (see 2.B.3(iii)).

In exceptional circumstances – e.g. when the refugees are particularly vulnerable or in urgent need of resettlement – Canada may expedite processing.

The Government of Canada sometimes makes policy decisions to expedite processing for certain populations of refugees. For example, in 2015, Canada implemented temporary facilitative measures to expedite processing of Syrian private sponsorship applications, including by deploying additional processing staff in Canada and to visa offices in the Middle East and prioritizing Syrian applications at the centralized processing office in Canada. However, these temporary measures were removed in April 2016, so Syrian applications now receive equal priority to other applications. This measure aims in part to reduce lengthy processing backlogs in visa offices in other parts of the world.

RESOURCES

- 🔗 IRCC, “Providing timely protection for privately sponsored refugees”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/laws-policy/protect-psr.asp>
- 🔗 IRCC, “Notice - #WelcomeRefugees: Processing privately sponsored Syrian refugee applications”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/notices/2016-06-22.asp>
- 📰 Michelle Zilio, “Sponsors frustrated by slowing pace of resettling Syrian refugees” (The Globe and Mail, 24 March 2016)
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/sponsors-frustrated-by-slowing-pace-of-resettling-syrian-refugees/article29390093/>

B.5 WHAT ARE SPONSORS' RESPONSIBILITIES?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to determine sponsors' responsibilities to the State and their sponsored refugees.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What are sponsors' responsibilities to the State?
- (ii) What are sponsors' responsibilities to sponsored refugees?
- (iii) How are sponsorships monitored?
- (iv) Who holds sponsoring groups accountable to their responsibilities?
- (v) What consequences arise if sponsors breach their responsibilities?

RESOURCES

- 🌐 RSTP, "Your responsibilities"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/groups-of-five/5-your-responsibilities/>
- 🌐 IRCC, "What are the responsibilities of a sponsoring group?"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=080&top=11>
- 🌐 SAH Association, "Review Sponsorship Responsibilities"
<http://www.sahassociation.com/guidebook/sponsorship-process/review-sponsorship-responsibilities/>

(i) WHAT ARE SPONSORS' RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE STATE?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsors' responsibilities to the State include:

- Submitting a complete and accurate private sponsorship application;
- Meeting the sponsorship eligibility requirements set out by the State;
- Ensuring they continue to meet sponsorship eligibility requirements during the sponsorship period; and
- Complying with government requests to monitor and review the sponsoring group's capacity to resettle refugees.

Sponsoring groups are required to demonstrate they meet sponsorship eligibility requirements at the time the refugee sponsorship application is submitted. Sponsoring groups undertake a legal responsibility to provide financial and settlement support to refugees following their arrival.

DETAIL

Sponsors' responsibilities to the State include:

- Submitting a complete and accurate refugee sponsorship application, including, where applicable, the forms outlining the sponsoring group's Settlement Plan and financial capacity (Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) do not need to submit a statement of financial capability, and SAHs with more than two years of experience do not need to submit Settlement Plans). If nominating the refugees they wish to sponsor, sponsors also need to submit forms outlining the refugee applicants' circumstances for fleeing their countries of nationality, their fears of return, and current living conditions. If sponsors are sponsoring refugees referred to Canada by UNHCR or another referral organization through the Visa Office-Referred (VOR), Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR), or Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) programs (see B.3(i)), they do not need to send forms outlining the refugees' circumstances, as the refugees have already been approved for resettlement by UNHCR and Canada;
- For Groups of Five and Community Sponsors, providing documentation demonstrating financial capacity (see 2.B.3(v));
- Updating the sponsorship application with the Government of Canada if necessary;
- Complying with any government requests for further information or documentation;
- Ensuring they comply with the sponsorship undertaking after the refugees' arrival;
- Complying with any government requests to monitor and review the sponsoring group's capacity (see 2.B.5(iii)); and
- Complying with any government requests to mediate a potential sponsorship breakdown (see 2.D.1, 2.D.2, and 2.D.3).

RESOURCES

- IRCC, "Application for Refugee Sponsorship"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/private.asp>

- SAH Association, "Review Sponsorship Responsibilities"
<http://www.sahassociation.com/guidebook/sponsorship-process/review-sponsorship-responsibilities/>

(ii) WHAT ARE SPONSORS' RESPONSIBILITIES TO SPONSORED REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsors should support sponsored refugees before they arrive in the following ways:

- Assisting sponsor-referred ("named") refugees in preparing their application for permanent residence and compiling the supporting documentation along with certified translations. The application for permanent residence is a difficult and complicated set of documents and it is highly unlikely that a refugee overseas could successfully complete it without either professional help or the help of an experienced sponsor;
- Sharing information and updates with refugee applicants throughout the application process;
- Ensuring refugees are aware of their interview and appear for the interview;
- Offering support for interview preparation; and
- Communicating with refugees to learn about their particular resettlement needs.

After refugees arrive, sponsors have a legal responsibility to provide them with care, lodging, settlement assistance, and support for the duration of the sponsorship period. Normally, this lasts twelve months starting from the refugee's arrival in Canada or until the refugee becomes self-sufficient; whichever comes first.

DETAIL

Sponsors have a legal responsibility to fully implement the duties set out in their Settlement Plan, including

- Providing for the cost of food, rent, household utilities, and other day-to-day living expenses;
- Providing clothing, furniture, and other household goods;
- Locating interpreters when required;
- Assisting in selecting a family physician and dentist;
- Assisting with applying for provincial healthcare coverage;
- Enrolling children in school and ensuring adults receive services under the Settlement Program, including language training;
- Linking refugees to the broader community and facilitating community connections;
- Providing orientation to life in Canada and services such as banking, transportation, etc.; and
- Helping in the search for employment.

Financial support:

- The Sponsorship Cost and In-Kind Deduction Tables included in the application serve as a guide to the expected levels of financial support required.

- Sponsors are expected to provide a level of support comparable to that of the prevailing rates for social assistance in the expected community of resettlement.
- The amount of financial support required varies according to the type of sponsorship program being pursued and whether there are cost-sharing arrangements with Canada as in the Blended Visa-Office Referred (BVOR) program, 3/9 and 4/8 programs, and Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) (see 2.A.4(v)).

Before and soon after the refugees' arrival, sponsors should clearly explain to the sponsored refugees their roles and responsibilities in relation to their resettlement. Sponsoring groups should clarify each sponsor's individual role for the coming year as set out in the Settlement Plan. Sponsors should highlight that their goal is to assist the refugees in becoming self-sufficient and integrate into Canadian society while respecting the refugees' right to autonomy.

RESOURCES

- ❶ Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>
- ❷ SAH Association, "Review Sponsorship Responsibilities"
<http://www.sahassociation.com/guidebook/sponsorship-process/review-sponsorship-responsibilities/>

(iii) HOW ARE SPONSORSHIPS MONITORED?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

At the beginning of Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program, Canada created the role of "Refugee Liaison Officer" (RLO). RLOs were hired to, inter alia, monitor the refugee-sponsor relationship during the Indochinese movement in the late 1970s and 1980s. RLOs were an important component to establishing a new community sponsorship program and its associated supports where groups of individuals were resettling refugees for the first time.

Though the role of RLO no longer exists, many organizations have acquired decades of experience in sponsorship that have helped establish Canada's program as it exists today. Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) generally monitor their Constituent Groups (CGs) while local migration offices monitor Groups of Five and Community Sponsors. SAHs may take an active role in ensuring their CGs are well prepared both before and immediately after the refugees' arrival. If challenges arise in the sponsorship following the refugees' arrival, sponsoring groups are encouraged to contact their SAH or local migration offices for assistance.

DETAIL

When Canada's PSR program was first established to respond to the Indochinese refugee crisis in the late 1970s and 1980s, the response from the Canadian public exceeded expectations. Canada quickly realized there was a need to create supports for communities across Canada sponsoring refugees for the first time. To respond to this need, Canada established the role of "Refugee Liaison Officer" (RLO) and recruited fifty-five RLOs across the country to provide a link between federal, provincial, municipal, community agencies, private sponsors, and refugees; mobilize community-based services; disseminate information to the public; counsel sponsors; and monitor the sponsor-refugee relationship. RLOs operated out of local and/or regional migration offices. RLOs usually made at least one visit to sponsors and conducted follow-ups by telephone to ensure the sponsorship was going smoothly. During this time, RLOs found that closer monitoring was unnecessary, and instances of sponsorship breakdown were very rare.

The role of RLOs no longer exists. However, many organizations that sponsored during the PSR program's nascent stages have through their decades of sponsorship experience helped to establish the program Canada has today. SAHs are encouraged to regularly monitor their CGs prior to the refugees' arrival. For example, SAHs should revisit the CG's Settlement Plan to ensure it is still viable. This is especially important if processing the sponsorship takes several months or years since the CG's composition and capacity may have changed over time. SAHs may also pay a visit to resettled refugees' homes to personally observe the living conditions of the refugees to see if they are suitable and appropriate. The visit may happen at the early stage of the sponsorship, once the sponsored refugees are housed in a permanent accommodation.

Following the refugees' arrival, in communities where local migration offices are present, the local migration office may interview the refugees, engage in mediation and conflict resolutions, or take various actions to ensure sponsors carry out sponsorship duties outlined in the sponsorship undertaking and Settlement Plan. Generally, migration officers connect with sponsoring groups if challenges or potential sponsorship breakdowns come to their attention.

RESOURCES

 RSTP, "Monitoring"

<http://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/monitoring/>

 Michael Molloy, Peter Duschinsky, Kurt F. Jensen, and Robert J. Shalka, Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees, 1975-1980 (2017)
<http://www.mqup.ca/running-on-empty-products-9780773548817.php>

(iv) WHO HOLDS SPONSORING GROUPS ACCOUNTABLE TO THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada holds Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs), Groups of Five, and Community Sponsors responsible for fulfilling their obligations to sponsored refugees. SAHs are responsible for ensuring their Constituent Groups (CGs) and/or co-sponsors are meeting their obligations. However, SAHs remain ultimately liable for the financial and settlement obligations of the sponsorship.

DETAIL

SAHs are responsible for ensuring their CGs are fulfilling their responsibilities. If CGs are unable to meet legal responsibilities, their SAHs must make alternative arrangements, as the sponsorship agreement is between the SAH and the Government of Canada. The CG's failure to comply with its responsibilities may result in consequences for the SAH, CG, and/or the refugees, depending on whether the breach of legal responsibilities took place before or after the refugees' arrival, and who is at fault for the breach of responsibilities (see 2.D.3).

The Government of Canada is responsible for ensuring that Groups of Five, Community Sponsors, and SAHs are fulfilling their responsibilities. If the refugees have not yet arrived, the Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa (see 2.B.4) may take certain measures to ensure the sponsoring group meets or will meet eligibility requirements. This includes, e.g., reviewing a sponsoring group's eligibility and addressing requests to withdraw sponsorships (see 2.D.1). If the refugees have already arrived, the local migration office will monitor whether the sponsoring groups are fulfilling their responsibilities and mediate any disputes among sponsors or between sponsors and refugees (see 2.D.3).

A sponsoring group's failure to comply with its responsibilities may result in consequences for the sponsoring group and/or the refugees, depending on whether the breach of responsibilities took place before or after the refugees' arrival, and who is at fault for the breach of legal responsibilities (see 2.D.1, 2.D.2, and 2.D.3).

RESOURCES

- 🌐 SAH Association, "Review Sponsorship Responsibilities"
<http://www.sahassociation.com/guidebook/sponsorship-process/review-sponsorship-responsibilities/>

(v) WHAT CONSEQUENCES ARISE IF SPONSORS BREACH THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

If the Government of Canada becomes aware of a sponsorship dispute causing sponsoring groups to fall short of fulfilling their responsibilities toward the sponsored refugees, the local migration office will attempt to resolve the dispute through mediation. If no solution is found, Canada will declare a sponsorship breakdown. The consequences for sponsors of a sponsorship breakdown depend on whether they are found to be responsible for the breakdown. If Canada determines that sponsors are responsible for the breakdown, they will be declared in sponsorship default. For more information, see 2.D.3.

DETAIL

SPONSORSHIP BREAKDOWN VS. SPONSORSHIP DEFAULT: When sponsors fail to meet their legal (financial and resettlement) responsibilities towards the sponsored refugees for reasons outside their control (e.g. there is a change in the refugee's personal situation or the refugee migrates to another location), this is a case of sponsorship breakdown (see 2.D.3). If Canada determines that sponsors are responsible for the breakdown, they will be declared in sponsorship default. Sponsorship default carries more serious consequences than a breakdown and would impact a sponsor's ability to submit new applications.

GROUPS LIABLE FOR (IN)ACTION OF THEIR MEMBERS:

- Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) are responsible for the actions of their Constituent Groups (CGs). If CGs fail to fulfill their responsibilities, SAHs must fulfill the sponsorship obligations. If they do not, they may be declared in default and their sponsorship agreement may be cancelled, suspended, or amended.
- If a member of a Group of Five fails to fulfill his/her sponsorship obligations, the rest of the group members must fulfill those responsibilities to the sponsored refugees or find an additional group member. If the sponsorship undertaking is breached, the entire group is generally declared in default.
- When a co-sponsor defaults on his/her obligations, the other parties to the sponsorship are legally bound to cover the first party's responsibilities.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "IP 3 Part 2: Resettlement Assistance Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/ip/ip03-part2-eng.pdf>

B.6 WHAT STEPS DO SPONSORS NEED TO TAKE TO PREPARE FOR THE REFUGEES' ARRIVAL?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Sponsors should understand how to prepare for their sponsored refugees' arrival and first year.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) How do sponsors plan for sponsored refugees' arrival and first year in their new country?
- (ii) When and how are sponsors notified of the refugees' date of arrival?
- (iii) Who can sponsors contact for questions and guidance prior to refugees' arrival?
- (iv) What types of preparation are necessary to immediately welcome refugees and prepare for longer-term stay?
- (v) Can communication pre-arrival between sponsors and refugees help to determine the latter's needs upon arrival?

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Destining and travel arrangements"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/processing/travel/index.asp>
-  Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>
-  SAH Association, "Settlement Work Plan"
http://www.sahassociation.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/D_PSR_Calgary-Settlement-WORK-PLAN-2016-Apr26.docx
-  IRCC, "IMM 5373A – Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5373AE.pdf>
-  RSTP, "Settlement Planning"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/settlement-planning/>
-  RSTP, "Supporting Settlement and Integration"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/supporting-settlement-and-integration-2/>

(i) HOW DO SPONSORS PLAN FOR SPONSORED REFUGEES' ARRIVAL AND FIRST YEAR IN THEIR NEW COUNTRY?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Groups of Five and Community Sponsors, as well as Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) with less than two years of experience must submit a Settlement Plan to the Government of Canada outlining, inter alia, the steps the groups will take to support the refugees upon arrival. This Settlement Plan outlines each group member's responsibilities and tasks pre- and post-arrival of the refugees.

DETAIL

Groups of Five and Community Sponsors, as well as Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) with less than two years of experience must submit a Settlement Plan as part of their application to the Government of Canada. This plan serves to demonstrate to Canada that the group meets sponsorship eligibility requirements and has the financial and settlement capacity to sponsor. Sponsoring groups must detail the steps they will take and division of responsibilities pre- and post- arrival in the Settlement Plan. In the case of SAHs with more than two years of experience and who are working with Constituent Groups and/or co-sponsors, the Constituent Group and/or co-sponsor must submit a settlement plan to the SAH.

Some pre-arrival tasks may include:

- Continuing to fundraise for an emergency fund;
- Preparing a budget with contingency planning;
- Researching the local rental market to determine rent affordability in the expected community of resettlement;
- Arranging temporary accommodation;
- Purchasing or collecting donated furniture, furnishings, and household goods;
- Scoping the community for schools, day care centres, language programs, healthcare providers, potential employers, settlement services, as appropriate;
- Stocking the pantry with food the refugees are used to;
- Preparing a welcome package for the refugees' arrival, which may contain picture bios and phone directory of sponsoring group members, bus map and pass, calling cards, bilingual dictionary, basic medication, and toiletries;
- Arranging a welcome dinner/potluck;
- Having all sponsoring group members attend a cultural sensitivity workshop;
- Communicating with the refugees before arrival to introduce the sponsoring group to them, set settlement expectations, and understand any particular needs of the refugees that should be addressed post-arrival (see 2.A.5).

Extensive planning for the refugees' arrival and first year is important because it ensures a better relationship between the sponsoring group and refugees. It also increases the chances that refugees will become self-sufficient post-arrival.

RESOURCES

-  RSTP, "What to expect"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugees/what-to-expect/>

-  Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>

-  IRCC, "IMM 5373A – Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5373AE.pdf>

-  RSTP, "Settlement Preparation"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Chapter-7-Settlement-Preparation-1.pdf>

-  IRCC, "IMM5440: Settlement Plan: Sponsorship Agreement Holder or Constituent Group"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5440E.PDF>

-  IRCC, "IMM 5515: Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment: Community Sponsors"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5515E.PDF>

(ii) WHEN AND HOW ARE SPONSORS NOTIFIED OF THE REFUGEES' DATE OF ARRIVAL?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The Government of Canada aims to provide sponsors with at least ten working days' notice of the refugees' travel and arrival details. Canada sends a Notice of Arrival to the sponsoring group as well as the local migration office where the refugees will resettle. The Notice of Arrival provides the date of arrival and flight details of the refugees, as well as other details including the names of sponsors, onward travel arrangements to final destinations, and any special needs (e.g., wheelchair required).

DETAIL

The Notice of Arrival contains sensitive personal information that should be treated appropriately if shared with external partners (e.g. other levels of Government, third-party service providers, etc.). See 2.A.2(vii) for more information about Canada's policies on sharing data between actors.

Issuance of the Notice of Arrival depends on when the travel arrangements are finalized, which can be difficult to control or predict. Canada and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) coordinate to ensure that sponsors receive a minimum of ten days' notice of the refugees' arrival date so that they have sufficient time to make final preparations to welcome sponsored refugees in their new communities. In some cases – e.g. large movements to Canada – it may be difficult for Canada and IOM to meet the ten-day goal due to increased pressures on processing resources.

Because refugee processing can be lengthy and complex, it is important to provide sponsors with the most accurate information possible to ensure they can make appropriate arrangements. For example, if notice is provided too early, sponsors may arrange for accommodation that remains vacant for many months prior to the refugees' arrival. Conversely, with too little notice sponsors can be caught unprepared to welcome sponsored refugees.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "OP 5 – Overseas Selection and Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad Class and Members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Classes"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op05-eng.pdf>

-  IRCC, "Destining and travel arrangements: Sending the NAT"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/processing/travel/NAT.asp>

(iii) WHO CAN SPONSORS CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS AND GUIDANCE PRIOR TO REFUGEES' ARRIVAL?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsors can contact the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program, local settlement agencies, ad hoc non-profit and volunteer groups, Canadians who have sponsored before, Canadian family members of sponsored refugees, and ethno cultural and faith based groups familiar with sponsorship for questions and guidance prior to refugees' arrival.

DETAIL

The **REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM (RSTP)** provides a broad range of written resources, webinars, workshops, and direct access to the country's lead trainers on private sponsorship of refugees. Sponsors can sign up for RSTP training sessions or contact its trainers directly via phone or email to ask any sponsorship-related questions as they prepare for the sponsored refugees' arrival.

In addition, local **SETTLEMENT AGENCIES** have vast experience in helping refugees resettled by Canada adjust to life in Canada and settlement workers are a rich source of information and experience they can share with sponsors.

When there is high interest from new sponsors, the resources of the RSTP and settlement agencies can be stressed. As a result, a number of **AD HOC GROUPS** have also arisen in some communities to offer enhanced, in-person support. An example is the **REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP SUPPORT PROGRAM**, which has mobilized lawyers across Canada to help sponsors through the application process. **LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS** and **COALITIONS** like **REFUGEE613** have also formed in many communities to coordinate resettlement efforts of stakeholders from multiple sectors, including supporting sponsors.

CANADIANS WHO HAVE SPONSORED BEFORE are a vital resource for new sponsors, as they can share the human experience of sponsorship, including the positive aspects but also challenges associated with managing expectations and inter-cultural differences. Sponsorship Agreement Holders are available to provide guidance to their Constituent Groups.

Finally, **CANADIAN FAMILY MEMBERS OF SPONSORED REFUGEES** are important actors to include in providing resettlement services to privately sponsored refugees even if they are not formal members of the sponsoring group. Family members can ease communications barriers and help the sponsored refugees adjust to life in Canada more easily. **ETHNO CULTURAL** and **FAITH-BASED GROUPS** familiar with particular refugee populations are also an important source of information and support to sponsors.

RESOURCES

- 🌐 IRCC, "Map of destination communities and service provider organizations"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/map.asp>

- 🌐 RSTP
<http://www.rstp.ca/>

- 🌐 IRCC, "Find help to adjust"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/resettle-providers.asp>

- 🌐 Refugee Sponsorship Support Program
<http://www.refugeessp.ca/>

- 🌐 Refugee 613
<https://www.refugee613.ca/>

- 📄 Kathleen Burr, “Local Immigration Partnerships: Building Welcoming and Inclusive Communities through Multi-Level Governance” (Horizons Policy Research Initiative, 2011)
<http://p2pcanada.ca/files/2011/10/Local-Immigration-Partnerships-Building-Welcoming-and-Inclusive-Communities.pdf>

- 🌐 IRCC, “Refugee Sponsorship Training Program”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/private-rstp.asp>

(iv) WHAT TYPES OF PREPARATION ARE NECESSARY TO IMMEDIATELY WELCOME REFUGEES AND PREPARE FOR LONGER-TERM STAY?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

A small number of sponsoring group members should welcome the refugees at the airport. The group's settlement plan should outline which sponsors will fulfill the immediate tasks following the refugees' arrival, which may include bringing the refugees to their temporary accommodation, applying for services like healthcare, opening a bank account, registering them in school, finding appropriate clothing, explaining how to budget available funds, and providing orientation.

DETAIL

Pre-arrival communication is beneficial for post-arrival planning (see 2.A.5). Before arrival and shortly after refugees arrive, sponsors should ensure they provide refugees with information about their budget and typical expenses they will incur such as rent, public transportation, and groceries, Canadian culture and the refugees' community of resettlement, and the refugees' rights and obligations in the resettlement country.

Members of the sponsoring group (as well as Canadian family members of the refugees, where applicable) should consider greeting the refugees at the airport, as this is a milestone moment for many refugees and sponsors, although the refugees may be exhausted and overwhelmed from their journeys. The sponsoring group should arrange to drive the refugees to their temporary accommodation. They should also consider providing a welcome package to the refugees and explain to them what to do in case of an emergency (provide phone cards, directory of contact names, etc.).

Depending on the sponsored refugees' language abilities, sponsors may need to arrange interpretation to assist them in welcoming the refugees at the airport and helping them get settled in their first days/weeks in Canada. If the refugees have family members in Canada (who may or may not be members of the sponsoring group), these family members can facilitate communications between refugees and sponsors. However, if refugees do not have family members who can take on this responsibility and sponsors do not speak the refugees' native language, sponsors will need to look to outside resources in their community to secure adequate interpretation assistance.

Shortly after the refugees' arrival, the sponsoring group must help them with important tasks such as opening a bank account, applying for provincial healthcare and childcare tax benefits, and obtaining a bus pass. An appointment with a family physician should be arranged as soon as possible after the refugees' arrival. If the sponsoring group is aware of any special medical needs, they should also schedule appointments with appropriate medical specialists (often following a referral from a family physician).

RESOURCES

- 🌐 RSTP, "What to expect"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugees/what-to-expect/>
- 📄 Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>

 RSTP, "Settlement Preparation"

<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Chapter-7-Settlement-Preparation-1.pdf>

(v) CAN COMMUNICATION PRE-ARRIVAL BETWEEN SPONSORS AND REFUGEES HELP TO DETERMINE THE LATTER'S NEEDS UPON ARRIVAL?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Pre-arrival communication is beneficial to both refugees and sponsoring groups. It helps develop trust and sponsoring groups can learn about the refugees' particular needs to better prepare their settlement plan. It is also an opportunity to provide settlement orientation to the refugees so their expectations are more manageable upon arrival.

In some cases, pre-arrival communication may not be possible due to language or technological barriers. See 2.A.5 for more information.

DETAIL

Pre-arrival communication between the sponsors and refugees helps to improve the relationship between the parties, as it is an opportunity for sponsors and refugees to get to know each other and develop trust. As the sponsorship application is being processed, communication also helps the refugees feel more comfortable in meeting their sponsors in person upon arrival. Sponsors must be mindful their role is to provide safe and welcoming environment, so pre-arrival communication is not meant to discern personality differences and decide whether to continue the private sponsorship application.

Pre-arrival communication also assists the sponsoring group in preparing for the refugees' arrival. The sponsors can elicit important information from the refugees such as their medical needs, level of language and education, foods they eat, and clothing needs. This information will help the sponsoring group tailor their Settlement Plan.

Pre-arrival communication is also an opportunity for sponsors to explain their role, life in the community of resettlement, and manage expectations. Example conversations may include the culture of the resettlement country and community, what type of housing refugees should expect, what sorts of services and activities exist, information about the sponsors and their family and friendship networks, and what sponsors will provide. Sponsors should be cautious about raising such topics before an application for resettlement to Canada is approved, however. Premature discussions about life in Canada will raise expectations and cause significant disappointment if the application is refused.

In some cases, pre-arrival communication may not be possible due to language or technological barriers. Sponsoring groups should be encouraged to find ways to communicate pre-arrival, for example, seeking the help of an interpreter, or communicating in simple language over text message. For more information, see 2.A.5.

RESOURCES

- 🔗 RSTP, "What to expect"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugees/what-to-expect/>
- 📄 Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>
- 🔗 RSTP, "Managing Expectations"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/managing-expectations/>

 RSTP, "Settlement Preparation"

<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Chapter-7-Settlement-Preparation-1.pdf>

B.7 WHAT TRAINING AND RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO SPONSORS PRIOR TO AND AFTER REFUGEES' ARRIVAL?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Training and resources can help sponsor groups in applying to sponsor refugees and providing support to refugees during their undertaking.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) Where and how do sponsoring groups receive information on private sponsorship of refugees and receive guidance and support before or during their sponsorship undertaking?
- (ii) Who provides resources and training?
- (iii) Who covers the costs of resources and training?
- (iv) Are some or all sponsoring group members required or encouraged to attend trainings?
- (v) What other individuals or organizations in their community should sponsors share their information on private sponsorship with so that they understand the program when refugees arrive?

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Guide 6000 – Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/E16000TOC.asp>
-  IRCC, "Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Application Guide (IMM 5413)"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/5413ETOC.asp>
-  RSTP
<http://www.rstp.ca/>
-  RSTP, "Training"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/training/>
-  RSTP, "Resources"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/>
-  Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Mentorship"
<http://www.capitalrainbow.ca/mentorship>
-  Refugee 613, "Training Events"
<http://www.refugee613.ca/pages/events>

- Refugee Sponsorship Support Program, “Legal Support”
<http://refugeessp.ca/legal-support/>

- Canadian Council for Refugees “Private Sponsorship of Refugees Toolkit”
<http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/home>

(i) WHERE AND HOW DO SPONSORING GROUPS RECEIVE INFORMATION ON PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP OF REFUGEES AND RECEIVE GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT BEFORE OR DURING THEIR SPONSORSHIP UNDERTAKING?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsoring groups may turn to a variety of different actors for information, guidance and support. Examples include the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP), settlement agencies, local coalitions, experienced sponsors, Canadians with family abroad requiring refugee sponsorship, local migration offices, and Sponsorship Agreement Holders.

DETAIL

Access to information, guidance, and support varies depending on where the sponsoring groups are located. In smaller and rural communities, in-person training supports may be less accessible than in larger urban centres. Sponsors may need to rely more on internet and telephone communications to seek out information and ask questions. Actors who may provide information, guidance, and support include:

- The **REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM (RSTP)** provides a broad range of written resources, webinars, workshops, and direct access to the country's lead trainers on private sponsorship of refugees. Sponsors can sign up for RSTP training sessions or contact its trainers directly via phone or email to ask any sponsorship-related questions as they prepare for the sponsored refugees' arrival.
- **LOCAL SETTLEMENT AGENCIES** have vast experience in helping resettled refugees adjust to life in Canada and settlement workers are a rich source of information and experience for sponsors.
- **LOCAL COALITIONS** like the Coalition in Ottawa for Refugees, which is composed of experienced local sponsoring groups who meet to discuss community engagement, support for novice sponsoring groups, best practices, and sponsorship program reform. Another example is Refugee 613, a coalition of citizens, settlement agencies, sponsoring groups and community partners working to provide refugees with the building blocks of successful integration.
- **AD HOC GROUPS** like the Refugee Sponsorship Support Program and Lifeline Syria have formed to provide enhanced, in-person support to sponsors and refugees.
- **CANADIANS WHO HAVE SPONSORED BEFORE** are a vital resource for new sponsors, as they can share the human experience of sponsorship, including the positive aspects but also challenges associated with managing expectations and inter-cultural differences. Sponsorship Agreement Holders are available to provide guidance to their Constituent Groups.
- **CANADIAN FAMILY MEMBERS OF SPONSORED REFUGEES** are important actors to include in providing resettlement services to privately sponsored refugees even if they are not formal members of the sponsoring group. Family members can ease communications barriers and help the sponsored refugees adjust to life in Canada more easily.
- **LOCAL MIGRATION OFFICES** can provide additional support and information to sponsors and help mediate disputes among sponsors or between sponsors and refugees.
- **SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT HOLDERS ASSOCIATION:** Canada funds this organization to facilitate communications between sponsoring groups on an ongoing basis, and supports an annual conference that allows for mutual exchanges of successes, challenges, and best practices between sponsors, and also with

the Government. Canada also funds the Secretariat functions of the Sponsorship Agreement Holders Council, which acts as a representative body for the Sponsorship Agreement Holder community and meets on a monthly basis with officials from the Government of Canada.

RESOURCES

- 🌐 IRCC, “Map of destination communities and service provider organizations”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/map.asp>

- 🌐 RSTP
<http://www.rstp.ca/>

- 🌐 IRCC, “Find help to adjust”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/resettle-providers.asp>

- 🌐 Refugee 613
<https://www.refugee613.ca/>

- 🌐 IRCC, “IRCC offices in Canada – By appointment only”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/offices/help.asp>

- 🌐 SAH Association
<http://www.sahassociation.com/>

- 🌐 IRCC, “Refugee Sponsorship Training Program”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/private-rstp.asp>

(ii) WHO PROVIDES RESOURCES AND TRAINING?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

On a national level, the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) provides resources and ongoing training to sponsoring groups before and after the refugees' arrival. Local partnership groups may also provide support and facilitate workshops to groups preparing to sponsor refugees. The Refugee Sponsorship Support Program matches lawyers with sponsoring groups to provide pro bono legal advice and assistance on the application process. Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) provide supplementary training to their Constituent Groups (CGs) regarding their agreement with Canada and responsibilities towards sponsored refugees.

DETAIL

On a national level, the RSTP provides resources and ongoing training to sponsoring groups before and after the refugees' arrival. Typical topics covered in the RSTP's materials include sponsorship eligibility criteria, preparing applications, sponsorship application processing, and the sponsoring group's responsibilities upon the refugees' arrival.

The Canadian Council for Refugees, a national-level organization that advocates for refugees' rights, provides resources to assist sponsoring groups in providing settlement support. Local partnership groups like the Coalition in Ottawa for Refugees (COR) and Refugee 613 may also provide support and workshops to groups preparing to sponsor refugees.

The Refugee Sponsorship Support Program matches lawyers with sponsoring groups to provide pro-bono legal advice on refugee sponsorship or assistance in completing sponsorship forms, country condition research if beneficial to the application, and drafting cover letters.

SAHs provide training to their Constituent Groups regarding their agreement with Canada and responsibilities towards sponsored refugees. The SAH Association also provides resources and support to SAHs and their CGs across the country (see 2.B.7(i)).

RESOURCES

- 🔍 RSTP
<http://www.rstp.ca/>

- 🔍 Refugee Sponsorship Support Program
<http://www.refugeessp.ca/>

- 🔍 Canadian Refugee Sponsorship Agreement Holder Association, "Membership"
<http://www.sahassociation.com/membership/>

- 🔍 Canadian Council for Refugees "Private Sponsorship of Refugees Toolkit"
<http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/home>

- 🔍 IRCC, "Refugee Sponsorship Training Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/private-rstp.asp>

🌐 The Refugee Hub “Coalition in Ottawa for Refugees (COR)”
<https://www.refugeehub.ca/cor>

(iii) WHO COVERS THE COSTS OF RESOURCES AND TRAINING?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP), one of the largest programs to provide training and resources on refugee sponsorship, is funded by Canada. Other organizations may be funded by provincial and municipal governments, community foundations, charity organizations, membership and training fees, donations from private businesses, and individuals. Some community groups provide training and information on a purely volunteer basis.

DETAIL

The RSTP, one of the largest programs to provide training and resources on refugee sponsorship, is funded by Canada. Canada also funds the Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) Association organization to facilitate communications between sponsoring groups on an ongoing basis, and supports an annual conference that allows for mutual exchanges of successes, challenges, and best practices between sponsors, and also with the Government. Canada also funds the Secretariat functions of the SAH Council, which acts as a representative body for the SAH community and meets on a monthly basis with government officials.

Other organizations, such as the Refugee Sponsorship Support Program and Refugee613 are funded to provincial government grants, community foundations, the United Way, and donations from private individuals and businesses.

Other organizations like the Canadian Council for Refugees may be funded through membership fees and donations.

Local community groups like Capital Rainbow Refugee and the Coalition in Ottawa for Refugees may provide training on a volunteer, no-cost basis.

RESOURCES

- 🔗 Capital Rainbow Refuge, “Mentorship”
<http://www.capitalrainbow.ca/mentorship>
- 🔗 Canadian Council for Refugees “Private Sponsorship of Refugees Toolkit”
<http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/home>
- 🔗 Refugee 613, “Events”
<https://www.refugee613.ca/pages/events>
- 🔗 RSTP, “Workshops”
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/training/workshops/>

(iv) ARE SOME OR ALL SPONSORING GROUP MEMBERS REQUIRED OR ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND TRAININGS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsoring groups are required to demonstrate they are sufficiently prepared to provide settlement support to sponsored refugees for their first twelve months in Canada. As such, all sponsoring group members are strongly encouraged to attend training workshops, work with their sponsoring group to learn about the workshop content if they cannot attend in-person, or access online resources and training modules. Some workshop organizers require all or core members of a sponsoring group to attend trainings.

DETAIL

All sponsoring groups are required to demonstrate settlement capacity to meet eligibility requirements. Part of demonstrating settlement capacity is ensuring each member understands his/her role in the group as well as the sponsoring group's collective responsibilities. Accordingly, all sponsoring group members are strongly encouraged to attend training workshops to get practical information and advice from seasoned sponsors. Group members who are not able to attend training workshops should follow up with participating group members to learn what they missed, or they should access online resources and training modules. Generally, as many core members of sponsoring groups as possible are encouraged to attend trainings.

RESOURCES

- 🔗 Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Mentorship"
<http://www.capitalrainbow.ca/mentorship>
- 🔗 Canadian Council for Refugees "Private Sponsorship of Refugees Toolkit"
<http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/home>
- 🔗 Refugee 613, "Events"
<https://www.refugee613.ca/pages/events>
- 🔗 RSTP, "Workshops"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/training/workshops/>
- 🔗 Refugee 613, "Sponsorship Training and Legal Advice"
<https://www.refugee613.ca/pages/sponsorship-training-and-legal-advice>

(v) WHAT OTHER INDIVIDUALS OR ORGANIZATIONS IN THEIR COMMUNITY SHOULD SPONSORS SHARE THEIR INFORMATION ON PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP WITH SO THAT THEY UNDERSTAND THE PROGRAM WHEN REFUGEES ARRIVE?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsoring groups, particularly those in small communities, should contact all the relevant actors that will come into contact with the refugees when they arrive – e.g. settlement organizations, schools, health service providers, community centres, friends/neighbours – to inform them of the private sponsorship program and to prepare a welcoming community. Sponsors will need to be respectful of any particular sensitivities around privacy and sharing personal information or data that would violate refugees' privacy rights.

DETAIL

Sponsors can enhance refugee integration outcomes by preparing resettlement communities to welcome refugees. Through pre-arrival communications (see 2.A.5), sponsors can ascertain any special needs that will need to be accommodated when the refugees arrive in Canada. Sponsors should prepare ahead of time to meet these needs by connecting with, e.g., appropriate health and education service providers.

If sponsored refugees come with particular skills or credentials, sponsors should consult with employers to determine whether there is a path to employment in the specific field.

Once sponsors secure housing for sponsored refugees, they may consider informing the neighbours of the refugees' arrival and explaining the private sponsorship program to them to encourage them to welcome the refugee family upon arrival.

In many communities, there may be other disadvantaged groups who may perceive privately sponsored refugees as receiving disproportionate benefits and be reluctant to support sponsorship efforts as a result of this inequity. It is very important that all groups be included in a process of meaningful, transparent dialogue about these concerns – it not only promotes welcoming communities from all sectors of society, but also sheds light on other inequalities in society and may promote further advocacy to improve the lives of all marginalized groups in Canada.

RESOURCES

 Blake Lough, "Indigenous community welcomes Syrian refugees"(Global News, 26 February 2016)
<http://globalnews.ca/news/2544088/indigenous-community-welcomes-syrian-refugees/>

 Summer Reid and Annemarie Brissenden, "A warm welcome for new arrivals" (Gleaner Community Press, 15 January 2016)
<https://gleanernews.ca/index.php/2016/01/15/a-warm-welcome-for-new-arrivals/>

 Federation of Canadian Municipalities, "Welcoming Communities: A toolkit for municipal governments"
https://fcm.ca/Documents/tools/FCM/FCM_Welcoming_Communities_Toolkit_EN.pdf

2.C SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION

ACTORS MAY CONSIDER:

- C.1 What is the status of refugees upon arrival?
- C.2 What arrangements are made for housing?
- C.3 How is job search and training treated?
- C.4 What post-arrival supports are available beyond those provided by sponsors?
- C.5 How are physical, mental, and dental health treated?
- C.6 How is education treated?
- C.7 How is cultural orientation treated?
- C.8 How is language treated?
- C.9 What costs need to be considered and who covers them?

C.1 WHAT IS THE STATUS OF REFUGEES UPON ARRIVAL?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to determine what legal statuses, and the rights and responsibilities flowing from those statuses, may be conferred on resettled refugees. Legal statuses have implications on the success of integration and access to important services.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What legal status do refugees have upon arrival in their country of resettlement?
- (ii) What rights and obligations flow from resettled refugees' legal status(es)?
- (iii) What path(s) to citizenship exist for refugees?
- (iv) What are possible grounds to revoke a refugee's legal status?

(i) WHAT LEGAL STATUS DO REFUGEES HAVE UPON ARRIVAL IN THEIR COUNTRY OF RESETTLEMENT?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

When privately sponsored refugees' applications are approved by the Canadian overseas visa office, the visa officer will issue a permanent resident visa to Canada. When refugees arrive in Canada, a migration officer at the port of entry verifies their documentation and, if valid, issues a Confirmation of Permanent Residence. Thus, they have permanent resident status upon arrival in Canada.

In exceptional cases, overseas visa officers may issue temporary resident permits where circumstances do not permit full medical and security screening overseas. In these cases, processing for permanent residence is completed after refugees arrive in Canada.

DETAIL

Refugees approved by overseas visa offices for resettlement to Canada will receive a permanent resident visa to travel. When they arrive in Canada, an officer at the port of entry will ask to see the refugees' passports and other travel documents, and will make sure the permanent resident visa is still valid. The officer will then give the refugees a Confirmation of Permanent Residence, which they must sign.

Refugees can choose to remain permanent residents indefinitely so long as they continue to meet the requirements to maintain permanent residence, or to apply for Canadian citizenship upon meeting requirements (see 2.C.1(iii)). It is also possible for refugees to renounce permanent residence or for their status to be revoked (see 2.C.1(iv)).

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Understand permanent resident status"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/about-pr.asp>
-  AURA, "Permanent Residency and the Permanent Resident (PR) Card"
<http://www.auraforrefugees.org/index.php/toolbox/aura-info-sheets/permanent-resident-card>
-  IRCC, "Prepare for arrival – Refugees resettling to Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/arriving.asp>
-  IRCC, "Procedures for processing urgent protection cases: Temporary resident permits and permanent resident status"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/processing/urgent/permit.asp>
-  Centre for Refugee Studies and Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement, "A Report on the Settlement Experiences of Kosovar Refugees in Ontario" (2001)
<https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10315/2673/Lawrence+Lam+-+A+Report+on+the+Settlement+Experiences+of+Kosovar+Refugees+in+Ontario.pdf;jsessionid=FFDE52B1D0538D59D:sequence=1>
-  IRCC, "Find out if you're eligible: Citizenship"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/citizenship/become-eligibility.asp>

(ii) WHAT RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS FLOW FROM RESETTLED REFUGEES' LEGAL STATUS(ES)?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

As permanent residents, resettled refugees share most of the same rights and obligations as Canadian citizens, such as access to social services and the obligation to pay taxes. They are also protected by Canadian law and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Permanent residents may not vote, run for political office or hold some jobs that require a high level of security clearance.

DETAIL

The rights of permanent residents include:

- Access to most of the social benefits received by other Canadian citizens, including healthcare coverage;
- Ability to live, work or study anywhere in Canada;
- Ability to apply for Canadian citizenship; and
- Protection under Canadian law and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Permanent residents are obligated to:

- Remain in Canada for two years of every five-year period;
- Pay taxes; and
- Respect all Canadian laws.

When re-entering Canada, permanent residents are also required to carry their Permanent Residency Card, which provides proof of permanent residence.

Refugees can choose to remain permanent residents indefinitely or to apply for Canadian citizenship upon meeting requirements. It is also possible for refugees to renounce permanent residence or for their status to be revoked (see 2.C.1(iv)). While optional, permanent residents and protected persons may avail themselves of the services and supports funded through Canada's Settlement Program.

RESOURCES

- 🔗 RSTP, "What to expect"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugees/what-to-expect/>
- 🔗 IRCC, "Understand permanent resident status"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/about-pr.asp>
- 🔗 AURA, "Permanent Residency and the Permanent Resident (PR) Card"
<http://www.auraforrefugees.org/index.php/toolbox/aura-info-sheets/permanent-resident-card>

- IRCC, "Find out if you're eligible: Citizenship"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/citizenship/become-eligibility.asp>

(iii) WHAT PATH(S) TO CITIZENSHIP EXIST FOR REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Refugees resettled to Canada can apply for Canadian citizenship as soon as they meet the requirements in the following areas:

- Permanent resident status;
- Time lived in Canada (physical presence);
- Income tax filing;
- Language skills;
- Knowledge of Canada; and
- Prohibitions.

DETAIL

Specific citizenship requirements include:

- **PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS:** Applicants must have permanent resident status.
- **TIME LIVED IN CANADA:** Applicants must be physically present in Canada for four out of six years before applying for citizenship.
- **INCOME TAX FILING:** Applicants must have filed their personal income tax in four taxation years within the six years before they apply for citizenship.
- **LANGUAGE ABILITIES:** Applicants between fourteen and fifty-six years must demonstrate adequate knowledge of either French or English.
- **KNOWLEDGE OF CANADA:** Applicants between eighteen and fifty-four years must demonstrate understanding of the rights, responsibilities, and privileges of citizenship, as well as knowledge of Canada's history, values, institutions, and symbols through a citizenship test.
- **PROHIBITIONS:** Applicants who have committed a crime in or outside of Canada may not be eligible for citizenship for a period of time.

Refugees should consult the Government of Canada's website to verify the requirements before applying for citizenship, as sometimes the criteria may be amended by Canada.

RESOURCES

- IRCC, "Determining eligibility: Assessing credibility"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/eligibility/credibility.asp>

- AURA, "Permanent Residency and the Permanent Resident (PR) Card"
<http://www.auraforrefugees.org/index.php/toolbox/aura-info-sheets/permanent-resident-card>

- IRCC, "Bill C-6 Receives Royal Assent"
https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2017/06/bill_c-6_receivesroyalassent0.html

(iv) WHAT ARE POSSIBLE GROUNDS TO REVOKE A REFUGEE'S LEGAL STATUS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Privately sponsored refugees do not lose their permanent resident status merely if their Permanent Resident Card expires. Individuals at risk of losing their permanent resident status must be notified of ground(s) for revoking their status, and generally they have a right to appear for a hearing. Resettled refugees may have permanent residence status revoked because:

- They have failed to meet residency requirements to maintain permanent resident status;
- They are inadmissible to Canada on grounds of security, human and international rights violations, organized criminality, and misrepresentation;
- They have voluntarily re-availed themselves of the protection of their country of nationality or obtained protection from another country; or
- The reasons for which they were granted refugee status no longer exist.

Resettled refugees are also no longer permanent residents once they become Canadian citizens. Canadian citizens have all the rights of permanent residents plus the rights to vote, hold public office, and hold some jobs that require a high level of security clearance (see 2.C.1(ii)).

DETAIL

Refugees do not lose their permanent resident status if their Permanent Resident Card expires. Permanent residents can only lose their status through one of the four official processes:

- An adjudicator determines that the refugee is no longer a permanent resident following an inquiry;
- Refugees voluntarily renounce their permanent resident status;
- A removal order is made against the refugees and comes into force; or
- The refugee becomes a Canadian citizen.

Permanent resident status can be lost if refugees do not meet the residency (physical presence in Canada) requirements. To maintain permanent resident status, refugees must live in Canada for at least two years within every five-year period. The two years do not need to be continuous, and time outside of Canada may count under certain circumstances.

Canada's *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* allows for loss of permanent resident status if:

- The individuals have voluntarily re-availed themselves of the protection of their country of nationality;
- They have acquired a new nationality and enjoy the protection of another country;
- They are inadmissible to Canada on grounds of security, human and international rights violations, organized criminality, and misrepresentation; or
- The reasons for which the refugees had sought protection have ceased to exist.

Individuals may also apply to voluntarily renounce their permanent resident status. This may be desired, e.g. if they have been outside of Canada for a long period of time, would like to come for a visit, and would like to avoid a formal assessment of their permanent resident status in order to re-enter Canada.

RESOURCES

- 🔍 IRCC, “Understand permanent resident status”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/about-pr.asp>

- 🔍 IRCC, “Cessation and vacation in the resettlement context”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/processing/vacation/index.asp>

- 🔍 IRCC, “Reasons for Inadmissibility”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/EnGLIsh/information/inadmissibility/who.asp>

- 🔍 IRCC, “Renouncing permanent residence”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/perm/card/renounce.asp>

- 🔍 IRCC, “Cessation and vacation of refugee protection”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/vacation/index.asp>

- 🔍 IRCC, “How long must I stay in Canada to keep my permanent resident status?”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=727&top=4>

- 👤 IRCC, “Appendix A, Residency obligations”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/5445ETOC.asp>

C.2 WHAT ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE FOR HOUSING?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider how to best provide adequate housing arrangements for sponsored refugees.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What arrangements need to be made for initial housing upon refugees' arrival?
- (ii) What arrangements need to be made for permanent housing after refugees' arrival?
- (iii) Who is responsible for making initial and permanent housing arrangements?
- (iv) Who pays for sponsored refugees' accommodations?
- (v) Are government housing supplements available to privately sponsored refugees?
- (vi) Do refugees have autonomy in choosing where to live?
- (vii) Do refugees have the right to sign leases?
- (viii) How can private landlords be engaged to provide affordable housing to sponsored refugees?
- (ix) What type of housing is appropriate for refugees?

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>
-  RSTP, "Orientation Guide and Resources"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/settlement-services/orientation-resources-guides/>
-  Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>
-  Refugee 613, "Housing FAQ"
<http://www.refugee613.ca/pages/housing>
-  RSTP, "Housing"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/housing/>
-  Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "The Newcomer's Guide to Canadian Housing"
https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/buho/upload/TheNewcomersGuide_E.pdf

-  Nicholas Keung, "Refugees wait in hotels while sponsorship groups clamour for families to help" (The Star, 18 January 2016)
<https://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/2016/01/18/refugees-wait-in-hotels-while-sponsorship-groups-clamour-for-families-to-help.html>

-  Maureen Brosnahan, "Refugee housing challenges 'not insurmountable,' say those working to house Syrians" (CBC News, 21 January 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/refugee-housing-challenges-1.3412335>

-  Damian Rose, "Affordable housing for refugees is a major challenge" (Policy Options, 2016)
<http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/may-2016/affordable-housing-for-refugees-is-a-major-challenge/>

-  AURA, "Housing Guidelines"
<http://www.auraforrefugees.org/index.php/toolbox/aura-info-sheets/housing>

-  IRCC, "Housing in Canada"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/housing.html>

-  IRCC, "Buying a home in Canada"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/housing/buying.html>

-  IRCC, "Renting a Home in Canada"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/housing/renting.html>

(i) WHAT ARRANGEMENTS NEED TO BE MADE FOR INITIAL HOUSING UPON REFUGEES' ARRIVAL?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsors arrange temporary accommodation for refugees upon arrival. Temporary accommodation may include a sponsor/community member's home, staying with family members, an unused apartment, or a short-term rental. Sponsors should begin looking for permanent accommodation as soon as possible after the sponsored refugees arrive.

DETAIL

While government-resettled refugees may sometimes be hosted in short-term shelters, it is expected that sponsors find private residences for new arrivals. Given uncertainties surrounding processing times and the timing of travel arrangements, sponsors should wait until the sponsored refugees arrive in Canada before securing permanent housing for them. Temporary accommodations should include adequate space and internet access to facilitate communication with family and friends abroad. Sponsors should purchase ethnically appropriate foods for the family to feel at home in their temporary accommodations.

If refugees have family members in Canada, they often choose to live with them initially and transition to separate permanent accommodations once they have gotten their bearings.

Refugees also require proof of address shortly after arrival to access social services. Sponsors can make use of short-term rental agreements where appropriate to establish proof of address.

While sponsoring groups are ultimately responsible for finding adequate housing for sponsored refugees, they may reach out to a number of organizations that coordinate matching between Canadians who offer spaces in their homes on a volunteer basis or at a reduced rental rate for short-term housing for newly arrived refugees. Sponsors and sponsored refugees can benefit from the assistance of settlement or housing counsellors based in settlement agencies. Sponsors and sponsored refugees can also contact organizations like Roofs for Refugees to secure temporary housing while seeking permanent accommodation for the sponsored refugees. Roofs for Refugees allows community members to offer their homes or spaces in their homes to refugees at reduced rates. Spaces are registered online and Roofs for Refugees works with local settlement agencies to match refugees with appropriate hosts. This is another example of ways communities can engage in welcoming refugees beyond sponsorship.

RESOURCES

-  Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>

-  RSTP, "Housing"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/housing/>

-  AURA, "Housing Guidelines"
<http://www.auraforrefugees.org/index.php/toolbox/aura-info-sheets/housing>

-  Settlement.Org, "First Days in Ontario: A Guide to Your First Two Weeks in Ontario"
http://settlement.org/downloads/First_Days_Guide_EN.pdf

🌐 Roofs for Refugees, "How it Works"
<https://www.roofs4refugees.ca/>

(ii) WHAT ARRANGEMENTS NEED TO BE MADE FOR PERMANENT HOUSING AFTER REFUGEES' ARRIVAL?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsors should research housing options before the refugees arrive in Canada but refrain from securing permanent housing until after arrival. Permanent accommodations must be safe and accommodate the number of occupants and their needs, including accessing necessary services such as language classes, schools, and transportation networks. Housing must be close enough to the sponsors for them to be able to easily provide in-person support where needed.

DETAIL

Sponsors should research housing options before the sponsored refugees arrive in Canada. However, given the uncertainties surrounding processing times and the timing of travel arrangements, sponsors should wait until refugees arrive before securing permanent housing.

Shortly after the refugees' arrival, sponsors should manage refugees' housing expectations by discussing the reality of housing costs in the place of resettlement, especially in cities. Sponsors should remember that their role is to assist refugees in becoming self-sufficient and integrate into Canadian society while respecting the refugees' rights to respect and autonomy. Sponsors should explain the refugees' budget for twelve months and the living costs in their community of resettlement, but allow the refugees to ultimately decide how to use the financial assistance provided.

The refugee family should aim to sign the lease and be directly responsible for paying rent. Since newly arrived refugees are unlikely to have stable employment, sponsors may co-sign rental agreements or provide a letter to demonstrate proof of income for one year to assist refugees in signing leases.

Sponsors must also assist with utility, phone, internet, and tenant insurance arrangements. They should explain the refugees' rights and obligations as tenants.

Sponsors must provide all the furnishings and other necessities for the refugees' new home, and help refugees move in. Sponsors often collect donations of furniture and other household items as they prepare for the refugees' arrival. There are also many furniture banks across Canada that provide gently used furniture to families in need at little or no cost.

RESOURCES

-  Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>
-  Refugee 613, "Housing FAQ"
<http://www.refugee613.ca/pages/housing>
-  RSTP, "Housing"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/housing/>
-  Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "The Newcomer's Guide to Canadian Housing"
https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/buho/upload/TheNewcomersGuide_E.pdf

 Damian Rose, "Affordable housing for refugees is a major challenge" (Policy Options, 2016)
<http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/may-2016/affordable-housing-for-refugees-is-a-major-challenge/>

 AURA, "Housing Guidelines"
<http://www.auraforrefugees.org/index.php/toolbox/aura-info-sheets/housing>

(iii) WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING INITIAL AND PERMANENT HOUSING ARRANGEMENTS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsors undertake in their sponsorship application to arrange for initial and permanent housing for the sponsored refugees, including ensuring that homes are equipped with basic furniture and household essentials. With support from sponsors, refugees select their permanent accommodations (see 2.C.2(ii)).

DETAIL

In addition to sponsors, Canada funds a network of settlement agencies across the country (except in Quebec) that can provide support to sponsors and refugees looking for housing. Through its Settlement Program, Canada funds organizations to provide programming such as Needs Assessment and Referral Services to formally identify client needs and connect them to available supports.

While sponsoring groups are ultimately responsible for finding adequate housing for their sponsored refugees, they may reach out to organizations like Roofs for Refugees to secure temporary housing while seeking permanent accommodation for the sponsored refugees. Roofs for Refugees allows community members to offer their homes or spaces in their homes to refugees at reduced rates. Spaces are registered online and Roofs for Refugees works with local settlement agencies to match refugees with appropriate hosts. This is another example of ways communities can engage in welcoming refugees beyond sponsorship.

See 2.B.5 for more information about sponsors' responsibilities.

RESOURCES

-  RSTP, "Housing"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/housing/>
-  Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "The Newcomer's Guide to Canadian Housing"
https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/buho/upload/TheNewcomersGuide_E.pdf
-  AURA, "Housing Guidelines"
<http://www.auraforrefugees.org/index.php/toolbox/aura-info-sheets/housing>
-  Roofs for Refugees, "How it Works"
<https://www.roofs4refugees.ca/>
-  IRCC, "Settlement Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/grants-contributions-funding/settlement-priorities.asp>
-  Government of Ontario Ministry of Housing and Municipalities, "Housing"
<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page125.aspx>

(iv) WHO PAYS FOR SPONSORED REFUGEES' ACCOMMODATIONS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsors pay for refugees' temporary and permanent accommodations during the sponsorship period, which is normally twelve months or until the refugees becomes self-sufficient, whichever comes first.

DETAIL

While sponsors are responsible for providing sufficient funds to cover refugees' housing needs in their first year in Canada, they should remember that their role is to assist refugees in becoming self-sufficient and in integrating into Canadian society while respecting the refugees' rights to respect and autonomy. Sponsors should explain the costs of living – including housing – in the community of resettlement and help the refugees prepare a budget. Refugees should be able to live in suitable housing that fits within the sponsorship budget.

In rare circumstances, sponsors may be asked by visa officers to extend sponsorship to a total of thirty-six months before refugees' arrival (see 2.D.4(i)). In such instances, the sponsors' obligation to pay for the refugees' accommodation is extended. Sponsors can refuse to accept an extended sponsorship undertaking; however, their sponsorship application may be refused as a result.

Following the sponsorship period, refugees are expected to pay for their own accommodations. If they are not yet self-sufficient, they can access provincial social assistance provided they meet income and residency eligibility requirements. Some sponsoring groups may offer to continue covering refugees housing costs past the sponsorship period, although they are not required to do so. For more information about the post-sponsorship period, see 2.D.4.

RESOURCES

-  Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>

-  IRCC, "Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/index.asp>

-  Refugee 613, "Housing FAQ"
<http://www.refugee613.ca/pages/housing>

-  RSTP, "Housing"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/housing/>

-  Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "The Newcomer's Guide to Canadian Housing"
https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/buho/upload/TheNewcomersGuide_E.pdf

-  Damian Rose, "Affordable housing for refugees is a major challenge" (Policy Options, 2016)
<http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/may-2016/affordable-housing-for-refugees-is-a-major-challenge/>

-  AURA, "Housing Guidelines"
<http://www.auraforrefugees.org/index.php/toolbox/aura-info-sheets/housing>

(v) ARE GOVERNMENT HOUSING SUPPLEMENTS AVAILABLE TO PRIVATELY SPONSORED REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Privately sponsored refugees cannot access government housing supplements for their first year in Canada, as their sponsors are responsible for covering their housing costs. If sponsored refugees are not yet self-sufficient once the sponsorship period ends (see 2.D.4), they may access provincial and municipal housing supplements or subsidies. The available supports depend on the province the refugees live in.

DETAIL

If refugees become financially independent they will be expected to cover the costs of their housing after the sponsorship period ends. If they are not yet self-sufficient at the end of the sponsorship undertaking, they may access provincial and municipal housing supplements or subsidies. Social housing is managed by local housing authorities. It is available for low-income Canadian families that do not have resources to obtain suitable housing. However, a challenge in Canada is availability of and access to these housing options for refugees who are not yet self-sufficient, the homeless, and other low-income individuals and families. There are long waitlists, and individuals often must resort to shelters as they wait.

Under social housing programs, the amount of rent a family pays depends on its level of income. This is known as rent-geared-to-income housing. If subsidies are not based on income levels, the additional support received is called a rent supplement. Social housing can be a townhouse, an apartment or a single room. In large urban centres, waitlists for social housing may be long, possibly up to ten years. Those on waitlists must live off of whatever income they bring in or income assistance they receive from the province; those who cannot afford housing may need to stay in shelters or hotels.

Other forms of social housing include:

- Co-op housing: A mix of units in a building that are rented at market-rate and subsidized units. Each co-op manages its own waiting lists;
- Non-profit housing: Rental housing built by a community group, religious group, or other non-profit organization whose ultimate goal is to provide housing to those in need, not to make a profit;
- Public housing: Housing that has been built by and is managed by the provincial government. These units are reserved for individuals who are most in need.

If sponsors fail to provide adequate financial assistance to their sponsored refugees during the undertaking period, refugees may be able to access government housing supplement (see 2.D.3(iii)).

RESOURCES

- Refugee 613, "Housing FAQ"
<http://www.refugee613.ca/pages/housing>

-  Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "The Newcomer's Guide to Canadian Housing"
https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/buho/upload/TheNewcomersGuide_E.pdf

-  Settlement.org, "What is subsidized housing"
<http://settlement.org/ontario/housing/subsidized-housing/subsidized-housing/what-is-subsidized-housing/>

-  Neville Park, "Torontoist Explains: The Social Housing Waitlist" (Torontoist, 25 January 2016)
<http://torontoist.com/2016/01/torontoist-explains-the-social-housing-waitlist/>

(vi) DO REFUGEES HAVE AUTONOMY IN CHOOSING WHERE TO LIVE?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Though sponsors are responsible for ensuring that refugees have appropriate and affordable permanent housing for their first year in Canada, refugees should have autonomy in deciding which location and type of housing they live in, subject to budgetary constraints. Sponsors should manage expectations carefully regarding the costs of living in their community, and ensure the refugees understand their budget for the sponsorship period. Sponsors must orient the refugees to their new community, amenities, and access to services. They must present housing options that are not only accessible financially, but also geographically to meet the refugees' needs.

It is generally expected that privately sponsored refugees will live in the same community as their sponsors. However, as permanent residents, sponsored refugees have mobility rights, so they may sometimes choose to relocate to another community in Canada. This could lead to a sponsorship breakdown (see 2.D.3).

DETAIL

Refugees should have autonomy in deciding which location and type of housing they live in, within their budget. Sponsors should manage expectations carefully regarding the costs of living in their community, and ensure the refugees understand their budget for the sponsorship period. Sponsors should present housing options that are affordable but also accessible to necessary services such as language training, healthcare, schools, etc.

In some circumstances, refugees may decide to move out of their sponsoring group's community during the sponsorship period. This may happen for various reasons – e.g. family or community ties in another part of the country or lack of employment opportunities. If the refugees relocate, the Government of Canada or the current sponsoring group may endeavor to find a replacement sponsoring group for the refugees in their new communities of settlement. If new sponsors cannot be found, refugees are able to access, depending on the circumstances, federal or provincial/municipal income support until they become self-sufficient (see 2,D.3).

A sponsorship breakdown ends the sponsorship undertaking and there are no negative consequences to the sponsors if they are not at fault for the breakdown. The Government of Canada will endeavor to find a replacement sponsoring group for the refugees in their new community of settlement. If new sponsors cannot be found, refugees are able to access, depending on the circumstances, federal or provincial/municipal income support until they become self-sufficient (see 2.D.3).

RESOURCES

 IRCC, "Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Application Guide (IMM 5413)
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/5413ETOC.asp>

 Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>

 IRCC, "Understand permanent resident status"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/about-pr.asp>

(vii) DO REFUGEES HAVE THE RIGHT TO SIGN LEASES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Refugees have the right to and should sign the lease for their accommodation. Signing the lease and understanding its terms is an important part of learning the rights and responsibilities of tenants under Canadian law. Any rental application received from a refugee should be treated and processed in an equal and consistent manner, in keeping with provincial non-discrimination law.

In some cases, it may be difficult for refugees to meet minimum income requirements for rent since they have no history of renting or working in Canada. Sponsors may need to co-sign rental agreements as guarantors or provide a letter to demonstrate proof of income for one year to assist refugees in signing leases.

DETAIL

Refugees have the right to and should sign the lease for their accommodation. Provincial human rights legislation prohibits potential tenants from being treated unfairly due to their refugee status. For example, section 2(1) of the *Ontario Human Rights Code* provides that “[e]very person has a right to equal treatment with respect to the occupancy of accommodation, without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, or disability.”

RESOURCES

-  Capital Rainbow Refuge, “Settlement Plan for X&X”
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>

-  Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario, “Q’s and A’s: Refugee Tenancy Applications”
<https://www.frpo.org/uncategorized/qs-as-refugee-tenancy-applications>

-  Ontario Human Rights Code
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19>

(viii) HOW CAN PRIVATE LANDLORDS BE ENGAGED TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO SPONSORED REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

In Canada, municipal governments, non-profit organizations, and sponsors have engaged landlords by establishing cross-sector councils or task forces. These groups work to meet refugee housing needs, make public calls to landlords to provide housing, create housing registries for refugees, and make information available to landlords regarding the benefits of renting to refugees (e.g. refugees have guaranteed income for their first year, making payment more likely to be secure).

DETAIL

In Canada, particularly in the context of the Syrian refugee crisis, landlords have come forward to assist with permanent housing for refugees in many cities, including in response to public calls to address housing shortages. Non-profit organizations also work as advocates on housing issues and actively engage landlords, settlement agencies, and municipalities. Refugee 613, for example, is working to expand the supply of low-cost housing in Ottawa and help refugees find housing on limited budgets. As part of these efforts, it has led the development of a volunteer-run web portal and housing service called Roofs for Refugees that connects housing offers with refugees, sponsoring groups, and settlement agencies.

RESOURCES

- 🌐 Refugee 613, “Housing FAQ”
<http://www.refugee613.ca/pages/housing>
- 🌐 RSTP, “Housing”
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/housing/>
- 🌐 Roofs for Refugees, “How it Works”
<https://www.roofs4refugees.ca/>
- 📄 Silvius, Ray, Hani Ataan Al-Ubeady, Dylan Chyz-Lund, Carlos Colorado and Emily Halldorson, “What Does it Take to House a Syrian Refugee?”
[https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Manitoba Office/2017/01/Syrian Refugee Resettlement.pdf](https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Manitoba%20Office/2017/01/Syrian%20Refugee%20Resettlement.pdf)
- 📄 Stevens, Jon, “Accommodate PRS: Effective engagement with landlords”
[http://www.hact.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Archives/2014/10/5. APRS Effective Engagement with Landlords report.pdf](http://www.hact.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Archives/2014/10/5.%20APRS%20Effective%20Engagement%20with%20Landlords%20report.pdf)
- 🌐 City of Toronto, “City of Toronto Resettlement Program”
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2015/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-83896.pdf>

(ix) WHAT TYPE OF HOUSING IS APPROPRIATE FOR REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

When refugees first arrive in Canada, sponsoring groups must ensure they are provided with appropriate temporary accommodation. This may include a community member/sponsor's home or a temporary rental unit. Sponsors should ensure that refugees receive a welcome package, which may contain picture bios and a phone directly of sponsoring group members, bus map and pass, calling cards, bilingual dictionary, basic medication, and toiletries. Temporary accommodation must provide adequate space for the number of occupants, and should have access to telephone and internet services so that refugees can communicate with their loved ones abroad. Sponsors should ensure that ethnically appropriate food is available in the temporary accommodation to help the refugees feel at home.

Sponsors should research housing options prior to the refugees' arrival, but should not secure permanent housing until after refugees arrive. Refugees' arrival may be delayed due to unforeseen circumstances, e.g., obtaining an exit visa in the host country. Refugees should also have the opportunity to choose their own housing out of a range of options that fall within their budget. Appropriate permanent housing can include apartments or home rentals. It is important to ensure that housing has adequate space for the number of occupants, and is in a safe and secure location, close to employment opportunities, public transit, services, and sponsoring group members.

DETAIL

Sponsors must work with refugees to manage their expectations regarding appropriate housing in Canada. For example, some refugees may enter Canada with the expectation of living in a house, but find that a small apartment is more appropriate owing to budgetary constraints. Some sponsors may choose to increase their financial assistance towards sponsored refugees' housing, but sponsors and refugees should work together to find a housing option that refugees will be able to afford once the sponsorship undertaking period ends.

Additionally, it is important to consider whether permanent housing is situated near others from a similar ethno cultural background and appropriate supports such as medical facilities, trauma counselling, and settlement services such as language training. Proximity to these services and networks is more important than being close to sponsors. Sponsors are normally much more mobile than refugees and generally live in neighborhoods that refugees may not be able to afford after the first year.

RESOURCES

-  Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>
-  RSTP, "Housing"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/housing/>
-  AURA, "Housing Guidelines"
<http://www.auraforrefugees.org/index.php/toolbox/aura-info-sheets/housing>

C.3 HOW IS JOB SEARCH AND TRAINING TREATED?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider strategies to assist sponsored refugees in accessing the job market and become self-sufficient.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What are the costs and benefits for refugees entering the job market before the sponsorship period ends?
- (ii) Who provides employment-related services to refugees? What types of employment-related services are available?
- (iii) How can sponsors assist refugees to find employment?
- (iv) Is it mandatory for privately sponsored refugees to find employment?
- (v) Do any special employment conditions or restrictions apply to sponsored refugees?

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>
-  RSTP, "Employment"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/employment/>
-  Rachele Younglai, "Privately Sponsored Refugees Fare Better in the Job Market" (The Globe and Mail, 22 December 2015)
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/privately-sponsored-refugees-fare-better-in-job-market/article27901192/>
-  YMCA-YWCA National Capital, "Employment and Newcomer Services"
<http://www.ymcaywca.ca/Youth/employmentservices/>
-  Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, "Meaningful employment for refugees"
<http://triec.ca/meaningful-employment-for-refugees/>
-  Immigrant Employment Council of BC, "Onboarding Syrian Refugees: A Toolkit for Employers"
<http://iecbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/IECBC-Syrians-4a-web.pdf>
-  KEYS Job Centre, "Refugee Resettlement Services Kingston"
<http://keys.ca/rap/>

-  UNHCR, "The labour market integration of resettled refugees" (Policy Development and Evaluation Service, 2013)
<http://www.unhcr.org/5273a9e89.pdf>

-  IRCC, "Prepare to work in Canada"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/prepare-life-canada/prepare-work.html>

-  IRCC, "Look for jobs in Canada"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/prepare-life-canada/prepare-work/look-jobs.html>

-  IRCC, "THE EMPLOYER'S ROADMAP: Hiring & Retaining Internationally Trained Workers"
<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/employer-roadmap-en.pdf>

(i) WHAT ARE THE COSTS AND BENEFITS FOR REFUGEES ENTERING THE JOB MARKET BEFORE THE SPONSORSHIP PERIOD ENDS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Privately sponsored refugees arrive with different skills and levels of education. Finding employment in their country of resettlement that is commensurate with refugees' skills and experience is important for successful integration. Entering the job market early may help refugees become financially self-sufficient sooner. For refugees who were once breadwinners for their families but who lost their ability to care for them financially due to their previous living conditions, earning an income can be an empowering experience. For some, the interaction with co-workers while pursuing part-time language classes may help to accelerate language acquisition and promote quicker integration.

However, entering the job market too soon may mean that some refugees will obtain low-skilled jobs that do not harness their existing experience and expertise. Early entry may also delay opportunities for formal language training, skills upgrading and accreditation for existing credentials in Canada. Though refugees earn income sooner, their income may be at a lower rate than what they eventually make if they are able to find employment in their own field of expertise.

DETAIL

Private sponsors undertake to provide sponsored refugees with income assistance for their first year in Canada. This gives refugees the time and space to focus on gaining important language skills that are central to entering the job market. Entering the job market too early may mean that refugees obtain employment in low-skilled jobs that are not commensurate with their skills and experience, and may stall their language training that could ultimately gain them access to work in their field. Finding meaningful work is an important element of successful integration.

However, entering the job market early may help refugees become financially self-sufficient sooner and increase their sense of empowerment over their own lives by being able to care for their families. Refugees have varying educational and work backgrounds which require flexible responses with respect to integration. Highly skilled and educated refugees may learn language effectively in a classroom environment, whereas refugees illiterate in their own language may not be as successful in a formal school setting. For some refugees, entering the workforce early while continuing to take part-time language classes may accelerate their language acquisition and integration through increased interaction with their co-workers and language classes offered at work.

In addition to having time to learn an official language, delayed entry into the job market offers an opportunity for refugees to upgrade their skills and seek accreditation in Canada for their existing education and experience. They can also benefit from volunteer activities as a means to gain work experience.

Though it is ideal for refugees to find employment in their trade, skill or profession, their first job in Canada may be outside their field.

Employers are also encouraged to provide opportunities to refugees that not only give employment but also access to language and further professional training. Employers are encouraged to offer flexible work schedules to accommodate language training and childcare duties; provide interpretation services during the interview process; provide opportunities to shadow other employees to learn the job; offer transportation subsidies; provide scholarships and employment opportunities for children of refugees; and integrate language training into the work structure. Some provinces provide employers incentives or subsidies to hire vulnerable people including refugees.

RESOURCES

- 🌐 Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, “Meaningful employment for refugees”
<http://triec.ca/meaningful-employment-for-refugees/>

- 📄 Lifeline Syria, “Sponsorship Handbook”
<http://lifelinesyria.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/LSSponsorHandbookFeb2016Final.pdf>

- 📺 Viola Pruss, “Syrian newcomers agree language training is key to finding work” (CBC, 8 December 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/refugee-jobs-language-training-1.3887203>

- 🌐 IRCC, “2016 Employer Awards for Refugee Employment”
<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1039069>

(ii) WHO PROVIDES EMPLOYMENT-RELATED SERVICES TO REFUGEES? WHAT TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT-RELATED SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Federal, provincial, and municipal governments all fund employment-related services for refugees provided through settlement agencies. As permanent residents, privately sponsored refugees are eligible to receive settlement services – including employment counselling – at no cost. Labour market access supports can include: networking, mentorship, work placements, and preparation for the credential assessment process to help refugees find employment in Canada.

Organizations outside settlement services providers also provide skills and training supports that are available to anyone living in Canada that is eligible to work (including refugees). These may be provided by colleges and universities, professional associations, provincial/territorial training providers, and local NGOs.

DETAIL

Local settlement service provider organizations such as MOSAIC in Vancouver, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO), and Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS), among many others, provide a range of employment-related services, including:

- **EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLING:** identifying short- and long-term career goals; researching alternative careers; developing individualized career plans; help preparing resumes appropriate to the Canadian job market; assistance in professional licensing; and networking;
- **WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING:** Can include providing information on navigating the job market and job search strategies; understanding workplace culture; creating Canadian-style resumes, preparing for interviews; computer skills training; and
- **NETWORKING:** facilitating work placements, volunteer opportunities, professional mentorships, career fairs and recruitment opportunities.

Special programs are often offered targeting employment opportunities for newcomer women and youth. For example, OCISO's Immigrant Women Mentoring Network connects newcomer women with mentors to promote their career advancement in their respective fields while helping them navigate complex every-day challenges faced in the workplace as refugees. Some service provider organizations, including MOSAIC and ISANS, also provide pre-arrival employment-related support to refugees through the Government of Canada's Pre-Arrival Settlement Services to get an early start on the job search.

For more information on other settlement services, please visit the Government of Canada's website.

Private sponsors should also support the refugees they have sponsored in finding employment (See 2.C.3(iii)).

RESOURCES

- IRCC, "Do privately sponsored refugees get resettlement help from the government?"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=095&top=11>

- 🌐 IRCC, “Prepare for arrival – Refugees resettling to Canada”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/arriving.asp>

- 🌐 IRCC, “Settlement Program”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/grants-contributions-funding/settlement-priorities.asp>

- 🌐 IRCC, “Find free newcomer services near you”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/services/index.asp>

- 🌐 Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia, “Employment Counselling”
<http://www.isans.ca/employment/for-immigrants/employ-counseling/>

- 🌐 Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization, “Employment”
<https://ociso.org/employment/>

- 🌐 MOSAIC, “Employment”
<https://www.mosaicbc.org/services/employment/>

- 🌐 SOPA, “Arrived Prepared”
<http://www.arriveprepared.ca/>

- 🌐 IRCC, “Before services”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/before-services.asp>

(iii) HOW CAN SPONSORS ASSIST REFUGEES TO FIND EMPLOYMENT?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsors can help sponsored refugees access the job market by facilitating access to settlement services in their area, providing background information on the Canadian job market, assisting with employment planning, job searches, resume and interview preparation, and making use of the sponsor's personal network to help connect refugees with employers.

DETAIL

Sponsoring groups undertake to provide assistance to sponsored refugees in finding employment. As part of their Settlement Plan, sponsors must demonstrate they are aware of and consider committing to registering sponsored refugees with local settlement agencies that can provide a range of supports, including employment-related services (see 2.C.3(ii)). Sponsors can also explain to refugees that they may want or need to get skills training to upgrade or re-certify in their profession or trade, or to learn new skills such as computer skills, customer service, hospitality, etc. to assist in finding work. Connecting with local settlement agencies will help sponsored refugees access various workshops, training sessions, counselling, and volunteer/mentorship/employment opportunities to help secure employment.

Sponsors can also provide the following assistance: helping sponsored refugees prepared Canadian-style resumes and cover letters, helping compile portfolios (where appropriate), assisting in navigating online job websites and classifieds and accessing applications, and helping refugees understand the barriers they may face in accessing the Canadian job market, including issues related to cross-cultural communication and the use of existing qualifications and skills.

Sponsoring groups are often composed of individuals with varying backgrounds and rich professional networks they should take advantage of in assisting refugees find work. Sponsors should encourage employees in their networks to hire refugees and create workplaces that not only benefit from the labour refugees provide but also contribute to their overall integration outcomes by, e.g. offering flexible work schedules to accommodate language training and childcare duties; providing interpretation services during the interview process; giving opportunities to shadow other employees to learn the job; offering transportation subsidies; providing scholarships and employment opportunities for children of refugees; and integrating language training into the work structure.

Sponsors should remember that while they must assist refugees in finding suitable employment, it is not mandatory that refugees work (see 2.C.3(iv)). Sponsors should exercise caution in offering employment to refugees they sponsor as the latter may feel compelled to accept the offer. Sponsors undertake to provide up to twelve months of income assistance to sponsored refugees and should respect refugees' dignity and autonomy to make their own employment decisions. Refugees should never be pressured into taking jobs that they do not want.

RESOURCES

- IRCC, "Prepare for arrival – Refugees resettling to Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/arriving.asp>

-  Rachele Younglai, "Privately Sponsored Refugees Fare Better in the Job Market" (The Globe and Mail, 22 December 2015)
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/privately-sponsored-refugees-fare-better-in-job-market/article27901192/>

-  UNHCR, "The labour market integration of resettled refugees" (Policy Development and Evaluation Service, 2013)
<http://www.unhcr.org/5273a9e89.pdf>

(iv) IS IT MANDATORY FOR PRIVATELY SPONSORED REFUGEES TO FIND EMPLOYMENT?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Private sponsors undertake to provide income assistance to sponsored refugees for their first twelve months in Canada or until they become self-sufficient (whichever comes first). Finding employment is an important step toward self-sufficiency, and sponsors have the responsibility to assist refugees in exploring and accessing employment opportunities. Local settlement service provider organizations funded by Canada also provide a range of employment-related services (see 2.C.3(ii)). However, it is not mandatory that sponsored refugees obtain employment in Canada, and there may be drawbacks to securing employment too early in the refugees' resettlement process (see 2.C.3(i)).

Employment support should be provided to refugees in full respect of their dignity and autonomy. Sponsors should never pressure refugees into accepting jobs they do not want or are not commensurate with their skills or experience.

DETAIL

Private sponsors' role is to help sponsored refugees become self-sufficient by the end of the sponsorship period, in full respect of their dignity and autonomy to make decisions regarding their lives. Securing employment and being able to support their families once again is typically a very empowering step in refugees' resettlement experiences that helps to promote their integration into Canadian society. It is important that employment is commensurate with refugees' skills and experiences, and refugees should never be pressured to accept work that they are not comfortable with. Refugees may choose volunteer opportunities to help them secure work and advance in their own field rather than taking a low-skill job that they feel overqualified for.

Refugees who are not employed following the sponsorship period may be eligible for provincial income assistance until they or their family member(s) are able to secure employment in Canada (see 2.D.4).

RESOURCES

- IRCC, "Do privately sponsored refugees get resettlement help from the government?"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=095&top=11>
- IRCC, "Prepare for arrival – Refugees resettling to Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/arriving.asp>
- IRCC, "Settlement Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/grants-contributions-funding/settlement-priorities.asp>
- IRCC, "Prepare to Work"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/work/index.asp>
- IRCC, "Find free newcomer services near you"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/services/index.asp>
- Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia, "Employment Counselling"
<http://www.isans.ca/employment/for-immigrants/employ-counseling/>

- 🌐 Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization, "Employment"
<https://ociso.org/employment/>

- 🌐 MOSAIC, "Employment"
<https://www.mosaicbc.org/services/employment/>

- 🌐 SOPA, "Arrived Prepared"
<http://www.arriveprepared.ca/>

(v) DO ANY SPECIAL EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS APPLY TO SPONSORED REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

As permanent residents, refugees have full mobility rights and the right to work anywhere in Canada. Provincial and federal human rights legislation prohibits employers from discriminating against refugees in hiring or in the workplace. Local settlement service provider organizations are able to help refugees overcome difficulties in securing employment through a range of employment-related services (see. 2.C.3(ii)).

DETAIL

Generally speaking, there are no special employment conditions or restrictions that apply to refugees. As permanent residents, refugees have full mobility rights and the right to work anywhere in Canada. Refugees may encounter difficulties in securing employment due to language barriers and challenges in finding equivalent work in their field of expertise. Canada's Settlement Program provides labour market access supports to help overcome some of these challenges, including: networking, internships, mentorships, work placements, and preparation for the credential assessment process. As permanent residents, refugees are also unable to hold political office and may be ineligible for some jobs that require a high-level security clearance (see 2.C.1(ii)).

Provincial and federal human rights legislation prohibits employers from discriminating against refugees in hiring or in the workplace. The *Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA)* provides that "it is a discriminatory practice, directly or indirectly, (a) to refuse to employ or continue to employ any individual, or (b) in the course of employment, to differentiate adversely in relation to an employee, on a prohibited ground." Prohibited grounds include: race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, disability, and conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted. The *CHRA* governs federal employers while provincial human rights statutes prohibit discriminatory behavior on the part of all other employers. For instance, the *Ontario Human Rights Code* provides, "every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to employment without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or disability."

Employers are also encouraged to provide opportunities to refugees that not only give employment but also access to language and further professional training. Employers are encouraged to offer flexible work schedules to accommodate language training and childcare duties; provide interpretation services during the interview process; give opportunities to shadow other employees to learn the job; offer transportation subsidies; provide scholarships and employment opportunities for children of refugees; and integrate language training into the work structure. Some provinces provide employers incentives or subsidies to hire vulnerable people including refugees.

RESOURCES

 IRCC, "Prepare for arrival – Refugees resettling to Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/arriving.asp>

 Ontario Human Rights Code
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19>

 RSTP, "Employment"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/employment/>

-  Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, "Meaningful employment for refugees"
<http://triec.ca/meaningful-employment-for-refugees/>

-  Immigrant Employment Council of BC, "Onboarding Syrian Refugees: A Toolkit for Employers"
<http://iecbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/IECBC-Syrians-4a-web.pdf>

-  Viola Pruss, "Syrian newcomers agree language training is key to finding work" (CBC, 8 December 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/refugee-jobs-language-training-1.3887203>

-  IRCC, "2016 Employer Awards for Refugee Employment"
<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1039069>

-  IRCC, "Prepare to Work"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/work/index.asp>

-  Canadian Human Rights Act
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/H-6.pdf>

C.4 WHAT POST-ARRIVAL SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE BEYOND THOSE PROVIDED BY SPONSORS?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider additional services for refugees other than ones provided by their sponsoring groups.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What services may refugees require that sponsoring groups cannot reasonably provide?
- (ii) Who is responsible for providing other services?
- (iii) What are the conditions to access other services?

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Interim Federal Health Program: Summary of Coverage"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/summary-ifhp.asp>
-  RSTP, "Monitoring"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/monitoring/>
-  IRCC, "Do privately sponsored refugees get resettlement help from the government?"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=095&top=11>
-  IRCC, "Find free newcomer services near you"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/services/index.asp>
-  Legal Aid Ontario, "Getting help from Legal Aid Ontario"
<http://www.legalaid.on.ca/en/getting/default.asp>
-  IRCC, "What kind of support do government-assisted refugees get?"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=098&top=11>
-  OCISO
<https://ociso.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Friends-of-the-Family-Page-1-pager.pdf>
-  MOSAIC
<https://www.mosaicbc.org/>
-  Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI)
<http://tcri.qc.ca/>
-  Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations
<http://mansomanitoba.ca/>

🌐 Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies
<http://aaisa.ca/>

(i) WHAT SERVICES MAY REFUGEES REQUIRE THAT SPONSORING GROUPS CANNOT REASONABLY PROVIDE?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsoring groups are only required to cover the costs of basic necessities (housing, furniture, clothing, public transportation, and other essential expenditures). Refugees may require the following services whose costs, if any, sponsoring groups are not required to cover: health and dental care; counseling services; credential evaluation, further education, skills training, specialized settlement supports, including formal language training; and legal services.

DETAIL

Sponsors must provide housing and the basic necessities to refugees. They also provide emotional support and a network that helps refugees better integrate into their new communities. Through these interactions, sponsors may informally provide settlement services such as language training, orientation, and preparing for employment (see 2.C.3), through lessons, conversation, and other activities.

Sponsors also facilitate access to essential supports that refugees may need but that sponsors cannot directly provide or pay for. For example, sponsors are responsible for facilitating access to government-funded health coverage and qualified healthcare providers but are not expected to provide or pay for healthcare. Sponsors are also responsible for making sponsored refugees aware of and connecting them with government-funded settlement services in their community to support their integration objectives. While sponsors may assist refugees by transporting them to and from appointments and other engagements where appropriate, they must orient refugees to the public transportation network, provide bus or metro passes, and encourage refugees to navigate their communities freely and independently as much as possible.

Many refugees may be eager to travel independently in Canada, and will be hoping to obtain a driver's license and vehicle very quickly. For many, driving is an important source of empowerment and self-sufficiency. Sponsors should explain the process of obtaining a driver's license in Canada and help sponsored refugees navigate the process, including by directing them to preparatory materials in their native languages where available. Sponsors should also assist refugees in considering the budgetary implications of purchasing a vehicle and insurance relative to the monthly income assistance they provide.

Sponsors must undertake in their Settlement Plan to connect sponsored refugees with settlement agencies in their communities. For more information about sponsoring groups' responsibilities, see 2.B.5.

RESOURCES

-  Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>

-  IRCC, "Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/index.asp>

-  IRCC, "Interim Federal Health Program: Summary of Coverage"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/summary-ifhp.asp>

- 🌐 RSTP, “Monitoring”
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/monitoring/>

- 🌐 IRCC, “Do privately sponsored refugees get resettlement help from the government?”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=095&top=11>

- 🌐 Legal Aid Ontario, “Getting help from Legal Aid Ontario”
<http://www.legalaid.on.ca/en/getting/default.asp>

- 🌐 IRCC, “What kind of support do government-assisted refugees get?”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=098&top=11>

- 📰 Rafferty Baker, “Driver’s licensing a frustration for some Syrian refugees” (CBC News, 7 December 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/syrian-refugee-getting-canadian-drivers-licence-1.3874570>

- 🌐 Settlement.org, “How do I apply for a driver’s license? What documents do I need?”
<http://settlement.org/ontario/daily-life/transportation/driver-s-licence/how-do-i-apply-for-a-driver-s-licence-what-documents-do-i-need/>

- 🌐 Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia
<http://www.isans.ca/volunteer-community/volunteer-with-us/>

- 🌐 OCISO
<https://ociso.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Friends-of-the-Family-Page-1-pager.pdf>

- 🌐 MOSAIC
<https://www.mosaicbc.org/>

- 🌐 Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI)
<http://tcri.qc.ca/>

(ii) WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING OTHER SERVICES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The Government of Canada, provincial/territorial governments, municipalities, and other community, educational, and not-for-profit organizations provide a range of specialized services that sponsors cannot reasonably be expected to provide to sponsored refugees. Sponsors commit in their Settlement Plan to connect with various actors to provide these other services (see 2.C.4(i)).

DETAIL

Sponsors must provide housing and the basic necessities of life, as well as emotional and community support to help resettled refugees integrate successfully into their new communities. Sponsors must also facilitate access to settlement agencies and other services so that refugees can receive support sponsors cannot reasonably provide, including:

- **HEALTH AND DENTAL CARE:** As permanent residents, resettled refugees are eligible for provincial or territorial healthcare upon their arrival in Canada. This healthcare may take up to three months to come into effect. Therefore while awaiting their provincial or territorial health insurance coverage, they are eligible for basic health coverage through the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP). The IFHP also provides supplemental coverage (such as mental health services, limited vision care, and urgent dental care) and prescription drug coverage (see 2.C.5).
- **COUNSELLING SERVICES:** Under the IFHP, resettled refugees can access services provided by allied healthcare practitioners including clinical psychologists, occupational therapists, speech language therapists, and physiotherapists. Provincial and territorial health insurance plans also have programs available such as the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, and not-for-profit organizations such as the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture.
- **EMPLOYMENT-RELATED SERVICES:** Through its Settlement Program, Canada funds a network of service provider organizations that provide a range of settlement services, including employment-related programming to newcomers, including refugees. For more information see 2.C.3(ii).
- **EDUCATION:** Refugee children can access primary and secondary education provided by provincial/territorial governments free of cost. Language training is funded by the federal government and accessible through Canada's Settlement Program (see 2.C.8). Settlement agencies also provide a variety of training programs – e.g. to gain computer skills. See 2.C.6 for more information about how refugees can access various educational opportunities.
- **LEGAL SERVICES:** Low-income families, which may include sponsored refugees, may access a broad range of free legal services (e.g. for employment, housing, immigration, welfare, and other matters) through provincial and territorial legal aid programs.
- **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:** Local transportation networks are administered by municipal and provincial governments, depending on geographical scope. Sponsors must orient refugees to the public transportation system and facilitate access to bus/metro/train passes to enable refugees to navigate their communities freely and independently. Many refugees may be eager to obtain their driver's license and purchase a vehicle to get around independently. Sponsors should support refugees in understanding and navigating the process of licensing, and discuss the budgetary implications of vehicle and insurance purchase relative to the monthly income assistance they provide.

RESOURCES

- 🌐 Legal Aid Ontario, “Getting help from Legal Aid Ontario”
<http://www.legalaid.on.ca/en/getting/default.asp>

- 🌐 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, “List of Legal Aid Offices”
<http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/Eng/RefClaDem/Pages/ClaDemGuideLegAidJur.aspx>

- 🌐 The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, “Assessing the Qualifications of Refugees”
<https://www.cicic.ca/1616/assessing-the-qualifications-of-refugees/index.canada>

- 🌐 RSTP, “Transportation”
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/transportation/>

- 🌐 Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, “New beginnings Clinic: CAMH Services for Refugees”
http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/care_program_and_services/specialty_clinics/Pages/New-Beginnings-Clinic.aspx

- 🌐 Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture
<http://www.ccvvt.org/>

(iii) WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS TO ACCESS OTHER SERVICES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

As permanent residents, refugees have access to a wide range of services also available to other Canadians, including healthcare and education, as well as specialized supports refugees. Fees exist for some services, such as dental care and post-secondary education. In some cases, there may be waitlists to access services such as language training and trauma counselling. Refugees can also qualify for legal aid. They must meet financial eligibility criteria and their legal matter must be covered by the services provided by legal aid. Sponsoring groups are obligated to meet the basic needs of sponsored refugees and are not obligated to pay for other services not offered free of charge.

DETAIL

HEALTH CARE: The Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) provides basic coverage to resettled refugees for a maximum of three months. This coverage serves as a bridge until provincial or territorial public health insurance plans come into effect. Supplemental and prescription drug coverage is provided for as long as the refugee is under government or private sponsorship, with initial coverage being issued for twelve months upon arrival. Coverage may be extended for an additional twelve months provided the refugee is receiving government or private sponsorship for the same period.

DENTAL CARE: Resettled refugees can access urgent dental care under the IFHP's supplemental coverage. Dental care under the IFHP's supplemental coverage includes emergency dental exams, x-rays, extractions, and dentures. Dentists also have mobilized across Canada to provide free services to refugees who cannot afford dental care – e.g. Canadian Dentists for Refugees.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: Students attending post-secondary institutions in Canada generally pay tuition fees. However, there are a number of initiatives, scholarships, and bursaries to help qualified refugees access and afford post-secondary education. Some examples include:

- World University Services Canada, which uses Canada's private sponsorship system to sponsor qualified refugee students to study in Canada; and
- In 2015, the National Association of Career Colleges offered \$2 million worth of scholarships to cover the tuition of 200 Syrian refugees.

LEGAL AID: Legal aid programs provides legal services to low-income Canadian citizens and permanent residents in the areas of housing, social assistance, immigration, employment, criminal law, and human rights. Refugees' income must be below established levels in order to qualify for free legal services. Refugees may be responsible for paying disbursement costs such as filing or application fees. Legal aid programs are provincially-funded.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Interim Federal Health Program: Summary of Coverage"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/summary-ifhp.asp>

- 🌐 IRCC, "Settlement Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/grants-contributions-funding/settlement-priorities.asp>

- 🌐 Canadian Dentists for Refugees, "Patients"
<http://canadiandentistsforrefugees.net/patients/>

- 📰 Amanda Pfeffer, "Canada's private colleges offer 200 full scholarships to refugees" (CBC News, 24 November 2015)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/canada-s-private-colleges-offer-200-full-scholarships-to-refugees-1.3332137>

- 🌐 Legal Aid Ontario, "Types of help"
<http://www.legalaid.on.ca/en/getting/typesofhelp.asp>

- 🌐 Legal Aid Ontario, "Am I eligible for a legal aid certificate?"
<http://www.legalaid.on.ca/en/getting/eligibility.asp>

C.5 HOW ARE PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND DENTAL HEALTH TREATED?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider sponsored refugees' access to physical, mental, and dental health services.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What arrangements need to be made to enable access to physical, mental, and dental healthcare services for refugees?
- (ii) What special health needs may arise out of refugee experiences?
- (iii) Who is responsible for covering the costs of healthcare services for refugees?
- (iv) What training and resources, if any, are available to healthcare providers working with refugees of different ethno-cultural and language backgrounds?
- (v) Are there healthcare providers who share the refugees' language background and/or who have experience assisting refugees?

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>
-  IRCC, "Interim Federal Health Program: Summary of Coverage"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/summary-ifhp.asp>
-  Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, "New beginnings Clinic: CAMH Services for Refugees"
http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/care_program_and_services/specialty_clinics/Pages/New-Beginnings-Clinic.aspx
-  Somerset West Community Health Centre, "Community Health Centres Join Forces to Care for Health Needs of Syrian Refugees in Ottawa" (9 February 2016)
<http://www.swchc.on.ca/news-events/news/community-health-centres-join-forces-care-health-needs-syrian-refugees-ottawa>
-  IRCC, "I need help with my mental health. Does the Interim Federal Health Program cover it?"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=1331&top=33>
-  RSTP, "Refugees, Mental Health, and Sponsorship"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/refugees-mental-health-and-sponsorship/>
-  RSTP, "Fact Sheet: Understanding PTSD"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder-PTSD-Fact-Sheet-1.pdf>

-  Hamilton Health Sciences, "Refugee and Immigrant Health"
<http://www.hhsc.ca/body.cfm?id=1965>

-  "Liberal government fully restores refugee health care program" (CBC News, 18 February 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/mcallum-philpott-interim-federal-health-program-refugees-1.3453397>

-  L. Hansen and P. Huston, "Health Considerations in the Syrian refugee resettlement process in Canada" (CCDR Supplement, 2016)
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/16vol42/dr-rm42-s2/assets/pdf/16vol42s-2_ar-02-eng.pdf

-  Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, "Syrian Refugee Early Assessment Considerations for Primary Care Providers"
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/emb/syrianrefugees/docs/refugee_assessment_considerations.pdf

-  Canadian Collaboration for Immigrant and Refugee Health, "Evidence-Based Preventative Care Checklist For New Immigrants and Refugees"
http://www.ccirhken.ca/ccirh/checklist_website/index.html

-  Centre for Addition and Mental Health, "Refugee Mental Health Project"
<https://www.porticonetwork.ca/web/rmhp/>

-  Canadian Medical Association Journal, "Refugee Health Resources"
<http://www.cmaj.ca/site/misc/refugee-health.xhtml>

-  Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, "Dental Coverage for Syrian Refugees"
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/emb/syrianrefugees/docs/dental_coverage_fact_sheet.pdf

-  Ontario College of Family Physicians, "Resources on Refugee Health"
<http://ocfp.on.ca/tools/refugee-resettlement>

-  IRCC, "Health care in Canada"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/health-care-card.html>

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/health-care-card/finding-doctor-dentist.html>

-  IRCC, "Other medical care"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/health-care-card/other-medical-care.html>

-  Multicultural Mental Health Resource Centre, Resources for Newcomers
<http://www.multiculturalmentalhealth.ca/consumers/new-page-test/>

-  Multicultural Mental Health Resource Centre, "Search Results for: find an interpreter"
<http://www.multiculturalmentalhealth.ca/?s=find+an+interpreter>

-  Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Guides and Publications
<https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/guides-and-publications>

-  ementalhealth.ca
<http://www.ementalhealth.ca/>

 ementalhealth.ca, "Select Your Location"
<http://Select Your Location>

(i) WHAT ARRANGEMENTS NEED TO BE MADE TO ENABLE ACCESS TO PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND DENTAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES FOR REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Upon arrival in Canada, resettled refugees are provided with Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) coverage to ensure they are not required to pay out of pocket for health care services until they become eligible for a provincial or territorial health plan. The IFHP provides limited and temporary healthcare coverage to address a variety of urgent and primary healthcare needs. Sponsors should assist refugees in applying for a provincial health card, selecting a family physician and dentist, and connecting them to mental health and trauma counselling where necessary.

DETAIL

Sponsors undertake in their Settlement Plan to assist refugees in applying for provincial health care coverage and accessing other necessary health services. Sponsors should assist refugees in seeking medical services covered under the IFHP coverage. Sponsors should be aware of any special health needs and research the available specialists to set up appointments once refugees arrive.

Resettled refugees who are IFHP eligible beneficiaries may access medical, mental, and dental healthcare services by finding an approved healthcare service provider. Only healthcare providers registered with Medavie Blue Cross are authorized to submit claims for reimbursement. IFHP Certificates are to be presented to healthcare providers each time a service and/or product is provided in order to confirm coverage. IFHP is not designed to reimburse beneficiaries or sponsors directly. If they pay for services/products covered by the IFHP, they cannot be reimbursed.

In extraordinary circumstances, efforts have been made by provinces and local authorities to ensure immediate access to healthcare for refugees upon arrival. Syrian refugees were assessed by officers when they arrived in Canada and referred for immediate care where required. In Ontario and Quebec, emergency medical teams were made available at airports. In some locations, community health centres set up clinics at hotels and offered initial screening to prioritize health issues. Local health authorities and provinces also organized transitional health services such as dental health clinics and catch-up vaccination programs.

RESOURCES

-  Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>

-  IRCC, "Interim Federal Health Program: Summary of Coverage"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/summary-ifhp.asp>

-  Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture
<http://www.ccvvt.org/>

-  Canadian Dentists for Refugees, "Patients"
<http://canadiandentistsforrefugees.net/patients/>

-  RSTP, "Refugees, Mental Health, and Sponsorship"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/refugees-mental-health-and-sponsorship/>

-  RSTP, "Fact Sheet: Understanding PTSD"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder-PTSD-Fact-Sheet-1.pdf>

-  Centre for Addition and Mental Health, "Refugee Mental Health Project"
<https://www.porticonetwork.ca/web/rmhp/>

-  Canadian Medical Association Journal, "Refugee Health Resources"
<http://www.cmaj.ca/site/misc/refugee-health.xhtml>

-  Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, "Dental Coverage for Syrian Refugees"
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/emb/syrianrefugees/docs/dental_coverage_fact_sheet.pdf

-  Ontario College of Family Physicians, "Resources on Refugee Health"
<http://ocfp.on.ca/tools/refugee-resettlement>

-  IRCC, "Search IFHP Providers"
<https://ifhp-pfsi.medavie.bluecross.ca/en/search-ifhp-providers/>

-  IRCC, "Guide 5568 – Application for Interim Federal Health Program Coverage"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/English/information/applications/guides/5568ETOC.asp>

-  RSTP, "Fact Sheet: All About Health Care Coverage"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/All-About-Health-Care-Coverage-Fact-Sheet-1.pdf>

-  Government of Ontario, "Apply for OHIP and get a health card"
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/apply-ohip-and-get-health-card>

-  Refugee 613, "Health Toolkit for Refugees (Ottawa Specific)"
<http://cciottawa.ca/wp-content/uploads/Refugee-Health-Toolkit-2015-2016.pdf>

(ii) WHAT SPECIAL HEALTH NEEDS MAY ARISE OUT OF REFUGEE EXPERIENCES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Special health needs may include mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder; immunization catch-up; and chronic and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and dental disease. While some health needs – especially physical health issues – are immediately identifiable, others, e.g. mental health issues, may only become apparent over time. Immediate access to contraception, and prenatal and postnatal care can also be a priority for women that may have had limited or no access to healthcare during displacement.

DETAIL

A number of factors give rise to the special health needs of refugees. Refugees may have experienced a significant gap in terms of regular healthcare affecting immunization and pre-existing conditions. Mental health is influenced by experiences of torture, war, death or disappearance of family and friends, severe deprivation, traumatic events such as hurricanes, floods or earthquakes, and forced displacement.

Specific health concerns may include: immunization for measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis, varicella, hepatitis B, tuberculosis, and hepatitis C; treatment for HIV, malaria and intestinal parasites; mental health and maltreatment issues such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, child maltreatment, and intimate partner violence; chronic and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes mellitus, iron-deficiency anemia, dental disease, and vision health; and women's health issues, namely contraception, cervical cancer, and pregnancy.

While some physical health issues may be immediately identifiable, others – especially mental health issues – may only become apparent over time.

RESOURCES

-  RSTP, "Refugees, Mental Health, and Sponsorship"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/refugees-mental-health-and-sponsorship/>
-  RSTP, "Fact Sheet: Understanding PTSD"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder-PTSD-Fact-Sheet-1.pdf>
-  Hamilton Health Sciences, "Refugee and Immigrant Health"
<http://www.hhsc.ca/body.cfm?id=1965>
-  "Liberal government fully restores refugee health care program" (CBC News, 18 February 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/mcallum-philpott-interim-federal-health-program-refugees-1.3453397>
-  L. Hansen and P. Huston, "Health Considerations in the Syrian refugee resettlement process in Canada" (CCDR Supplement, 2016)
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/16vol42/dr-rm42-s2/assets/pdf/16vol42s-2_ar-02-eng.pdf
-  Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, "Syrian Refugee Early Assessment Considerations for Primary Care Providers"
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/emb/syrianrefugees/docs/refugee_assessment_considerations.pdf

-  Canadian Collaboration for Immigrant and Refugee Health, "Evidence-Based Preventative Care Checklist For New Immigrants and Refugees"
http://www.ccirhken.ca/ccirh/checklist_website/index.html

-  Centre for Addition and Mental Health, "Refugee Mental Health Project"
<https://www.porticonetwork.ca/web/rmhp/>

-  Canadian Medical Association Journal, "Refugee Health Resources"
<http://www.cmaj.ca/site/misc/refugee-health.xhtml>

-  Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, "Dental Coverage for Syrian Refugees"
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/emb/syrianrefugees/docs/dental_coverage_fact_sheet.pdf

-  Ontario College of Family Physicians, "Resources on Refugee Health"
<http://ocfp.on.ca/tools/refugee-resettlement>

-  Ontario College of Family Physicians, "Resources to Assist Family Physicians"
http://www.cfpc.ca/Refugee_Health_Care/

-  "What's the deal with refugee health care? A brief explainer" (Global News, 26 November 2015)
<http://globalnews.ca/news/2363664/whats-the-deal-with-refugee-health-care-a-brief-explainer/>

(iii) WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR COVERING THE COSTS OF HEALTHCARE SERVICES FOR REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

In Canada, resettled refugees received temporary health care benefits upon their arrival through the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP). The IFHP is funded by the Government of Canada, and provides basic, supplemental, and prescription drug coverage. This coverage serves as a bridge to provincial/territorial public health insurance plans. As permanent residents, refugees are eligible for provincial healthcare coverage upon their arrival in Canada. Refugees can apply for provincial coverage immediately after arrival.

DETAIL

As permanent residents, refugees are eligible for provincial healthcare coverage upon their arrival in Canada. Refugees can apply for provincial coverage immediately after arrival.

Since 1 April 2016, the IFHP provides basic coverage to resettled refugees until the beneficiary qualifies for provincial or territorial health insurance and up to a maximum of three months. Basic coverage includes services from medical doctors, registered nurses, hospital care in addition to laboratory, diagnostic, and ambulance services. On 1 April 2017, the IFHP was expanded to include certain pre-departure medical services for refugees selected for resettlement to Canada prior to their arrival. The scope of pre-departure medical services include: the cost of the Immigration Medical Exam and follow-up treatment for diseases affecting a refugee's admissibility to Canada; voluntary vaccinations; services to manage outbreaks of communicable diseases; and certain medical support and devices that refugees with medical conditions require for safe travel to Canada.

Supplemental and prescription drug coverage is provided to resettled refugees for as long as the refugee is under government or private sponsorship, with initial coverage being issued for twelve months upon arrival. This coverage may be extended for an additional twelve months, provided the refugee is receiving government or private sponsorship for the same period. Supplemental coverage includes services such as mental health coverage, limited vision care, urgent dental care, prescription drugs, assistive devices, and some medical equipment.

Resettled refugees are provided with an IFHP Certificate of Eligibility by the Canada Border Services Agency upon arrival in Canada at the port of entry. Where an IFHP Certificate of Eligibility cannot be provided on arrival, coverage should be issued by a migration officer shortly after arrival. The IFHP's pre-departure, basic, and supplemental benefits are subject to maximum monetary limits.

Sponsors are not expected to pay for additional healthcare costs that are not covered by government schemes. However, often sponsors are able to recruit dentists and opticians in their communities to provide pro bono services to cover the costs of medication, glasses, dental work, etc. not covered by government schemes. Some sponsors either contribute financially even though they are not required to, or advocate to find other ways to get what is needed for the refugees. For example, the organization Canadian Dentists for Refugees formed in response to the Syrian crisis to connect refugees with free dental services across Canada.

Refugees may also be able to access free or low cost non-urgent dental care based on age or household income. Programs are subsidized by provinces or municipal governments through local public health units or community health clinics. Similarly, refugees may be eligible for subsidized drug benefit plans based on net household income, age and nature of disease or illness.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Interim Federal Health Program: Summary of Coverage"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/summary-ifhp.asp>

-  Canadian Dentists for Refugees, "Patients"
<http://canadiandentistsforrefugees.net/patients/>

-  Canadian Medical Association Journal, "Refugee Health Resources"
<http://www.cmaj.ca/site/misc/refugee-health.xhtml>

-  Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, "Dental Coverage for Syrian Refugees"
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/emb/syrianrefugees/docs/dental_coverage_fact_sheet.pdf

-  IRCC, "Health care in Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/after-health.asp>

-  IRCC, "Pre-Departure Medical Services"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/pdms.asp>

-  Settlement.org, "How can I pay for prescription medicine?"
<http://settlement.org/ontario/health/ohip-and-health-insurance/ontario-health-insurance-plan-ohip/how-can-i-pay-for-prescription-medicine/>

-  Government of British Columbia, "Get Health Care"
<https://www.welcomebc.ca/Start-Your-Life-in-B-C/Daily-Life/Get-Health-Care>

(iv) WHAT TRAINING AND RESOURCES, IF ANY, ARE AVAILABLE TO HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS WORKING WITH REFUGEES OF DIFFERENT ETHNO-CULTURAL AND LANGUAGE BACKGROUNDS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Healthcare providers can access a wide range of training and web resources for working with refugees offered free of charge. Resources include practical guides and toolkits, accredited online courses, monthly webinars, e-newsletters, and online communities of practice with access to subject matter experts. The Canadian Collaboration for Immigrant and Refugee Health as well as the Canadian Pediatric Society have developed resources for clinicians.

DETAIL

Canada partners with non-governmental and settlement service providing organizations to develop resources to facilitate the settlement and integration of refugees. This includes projects that aim to build settlement, social, and health service providers' knowledge and skills regarding refugee mental health and to promote inter-sector and inter-professional collaboration.

The Welcoming Syrian Refugee Initiative prompted further development and refinement of existing tools and resources in Canada to support culturally sensitive and evidence-based approaches to meeting health needs. In some locations, social services providers and medical interpreters were enlisted to enable Syrians to access healthcare and explain their needs.

RESOURCES

-  Somerset West Community Health Centre, "Community Health Centres Join Forces to Care for Health Needs of Syrian Refugees in Ottawa" (9 February 2016)
<http://www.swchc.on.ca/news-events/news/community-health-centres-join-forces-care-health-needs-syrian-refugees-ottawa>

-  Hamilton Health Sciences, "Refugee and Immigrant Health"
<http://www.hhsc.ca/body.cfm?id=1965>

-  L. Hansen and P. Huston, "Health Considerations in the Syrian refugee resettlement process in Canada" (CCDR Supplement, 2016)
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/16vol42/dr-rm42-s2/assets/pdf/16vol42s-2_ar-02-eng.pdf

-  Canadian Collaboration for Immigrant and Refugee Health, "Evidence-Based Preventative Care Checklist For New Immigrants and Refugees"
http://www.ccirhken.ca/ccirh/checklist_website/index.html

-  Centre for Addition and Mental Health, "Refugee Mental Health Project"
<https://www.porticonetwork.ca/web/rmhp/>

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<http://www.cmaj.ca/site/misc/refugee-health.xhtml>

- 🔖 Ontario College of Family Physicians, "Resources on Refugee Health"
<http://ocfp.on.ca/tools/refugee-resettlement>

- 🔖 Ontario College of Family Physicians, "Resources to Assist Family Physicians"
http://www.cfpc.ca/Refugee_Health_Care/

- 🔖 Canadian Paediatric Society, "Caring for Kids New to Canada"
<http://www.kidsnewtocanada.ca/>

(v) ARE THERE HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS WHO SHARE THE REFUGEES' LANGUAGE BACKGROUND AND/OR WHO HAVE EXPERIENCE ASSISTING REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Some local settlement agencies exist across Canada that, often through local partnerships, offer refugees clinical counselling as well as community and wellness programs alongside other settlement services to refugees. A database of healthcare providers that are registered with the Interim Federal Health Program is also available, which can be used to identify providers who work with refugees.

Translation and interpretation supports for accessing health services are often also available in communities where refugees have resettled through municipal, provincial, or territorial programming.

DETAIL

The Welcome Syrian Refugees Initiative prompted the creation of special refugee clinics in some localities. In Ottawa, refugees were referred to new "Refugee Hub Clinics" that provide longer-term healthcare for refugees awaiting permanent housing. The need for professional interpreters to translate medical terminology and bear witness to refugees' experiences also became apparent with the arrival of Syrian refugees in Canada.

Some hospitals – e.g. the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) – developed a Newcomer Navigator role. This role provides a resource to reduce barriers to care by educating families and staff about culturally appropriate health and social services, leveraging hospital and community supports, developing a pool of interpreters, in addition to providing direct support to these vulnerable families.

RESOURCES

-  Somerset West Community Health Centre, "Community Health Centres Join Forces to Care for Health Needs of Syrian Refugees in Ottawa" (9 February 2016)
<http://www.swchc.on.ca/news-events/news/community-health-centres-join-forces-care-health-needs-syrian-refugees-ottawa>
-  IRCC, "Search IFHP Providers"
<https://ifhp-pfsi.medavie.bluecross.ca/en/search-ifhp-providers/>
-  "It means hope': When Syrian refugees came to CHEO it changed everyone involved" (Ottawa Citizen, 11 March 2017)
<http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/it-means-hope-when-syrian-refugees-came-to-cheo-it-changed-everyone-involved>
-  Simplifying The Journey, "Helping newcomers navigate your complex organization"
<https://www.simplifyingthejourney.ca/>

C.6 HOW IS EDUCATION TREATED?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider how refugee children and adults will access education.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What are the education needs of child refugees?
- (ii) What are the education needs of adult refugees?
- (iii) What requirements must sponsored refugees meet to enroll in primary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions?
- (iv) How are foreign credentials assessed?
- (v) Who covers costs associated with foreign credential equivalency assessments?
- (vi) Do sponsored refugees need legal authorization to study?
- (vii) Who covers tuition and other education expenses?
- (viii) What support systems and resources are in place for teachers in classes with refugee students?
- (ix) What barriers to education do resettled refugees face and how can curriculums and approaches to education be tailored to meet their needs?
- (x) What can schools do to welcome refugees?
- (xi) What preparatory programs support successful integration outcomes for children and adults with education gaps and language barriers?

RESOURCES

 IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>

 RSTP, "Education"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/education/>

 World Education Services
<https://www.wes.org/ca/>

- 🌐 British Columbia Ministry of Education, "Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers and Schools"
<http://www.torontolip.com/Portals/0/Resources/Education/SyriaCountryProfile.pdf?ver=2016-02-23-122354-327>

- 📰 Steve Fischer, "Syrian children find comfort in numbers at Ottawa elementary school" (CBC News, 15 December 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/syrian-refugee-carson-grove-school-elementary-1.3895806>

- 📰 Giuseppe Valiante, "Syrian refugees in Quebec's French-integration classes learning fast, having fun" (Winnipeg Free Press, 29 February 2016)
<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/canada/syrian-refugees-in-quebecs-french-integration-classes-learning-fast-having-fun-369438432.html>

- 🌐 Teaching Refugees with Limited Formal Schooling
<http://teachingrefugees.com/student-background/canadas-refugees/>

- 🌐 Courtney A. Brewer, "An outline for including refugees in Canadian educational policy" (Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education, 2016)
<https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/cjnse/article/view/30706>

- 🏠 "An Educator's Guide to Welcoming Syrian Refugee Children" (The Education Leader, 28 September 2016)
<http://www.bcsta.org/TheLeader/index.php/2016/09/28/an-educators-guide-to-welcoming-syrian-refugee-children/>

- 🌐 IRCC, "Education in Canada"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/enrol-school.html>

- 🌐 IRCC, "School life in Canada"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/enrol-school/student-life.html>

- 🌐 IRCC, "Post-secondary education"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/enrol-school/post-secondary.html>

- 🌐 Employment and Social Development Canada, "Education planning"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/post-secondary.html>

- 🌐 Government of Canada, "Student Financial Assistance"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/education/student-financial-aid.html>

- 🌐 Employment and Social Development Canada, "Education planning tools"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/post-secondary/tools.html>

- 🌐 Employment and Social Development Canada, "Cost of post-secondary education"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/post-secondary/cost.html>

- 🌐 Employment and Social Development Canada, "Education Savings"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/student-financial-aid/education-savings.html>

(i) WHAT ARE THE EDUCATION NEEDS OF CHILD REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Child refugees should be enrolled in school shortly after arrival. Education is compulsory until the ages of sixteen or eighteen (depending on the Canadian province), or as soon as children achieve their secondary school diplomas. Refugee children may have lost years of school due to the time spent in their refugee situation or had limited access to quality education in their host countries. Moreover, students may have experienced trauma and loss, which can have an impact on their educational outcomes.

DETAIL

All children are required to attend primary and secondary education until they turn sixteen or eighteen, depending on the province, or as soon as they receive their secondary school diploma. Depending on their language capabilities, children may be enrolled in specialized classes to improve their language skills before transitioning to regular classes. Children may have experienced large gaps in their education due to their refugee situation, and may need specialized classes to catch them up with their age group. These gaps may also mean that children may be unfamiliar with conventions of a school and classroom, particularly in Canada. They may receive the support of an education assistant in class.

Settlement agencies and school boards should work closely together to prepare for students' arrivals and develop education plans that promote their overall settlement and integration. This includes developing resources to support work against bullying and discrimination against refugee students.

Many settlement and other community organizations also offer parenting supports including daycare and after-school and summer recreation that enable refugee parents to focus on their own integration – learning language, seeking employment, etc. Child interaction during recreational activities is one of the best ways to facilitate integration of refugee children. Programming is also offered to families when children are too young to attend school which integrates parenting support in child development with language learning and other settlement services.

RESOURCES

- 🌐 RSTP, “Education”
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/education/>
- 🌐 Care for Newcomer Children
<http://cmascanada.ca/>
- 🏛️ Catholic Principal’s Council of Ontario, “An Educator’s Guide to Welcoming Syrian Refugee Children”
https://cpco.on.ca/files/4314/5252/2722/Welcoming_Syrian_Refugee_Children.pdf
- 🌐 Teaching Refugees with Limited Formal Schooling, “Instructional Resources”
<http://teachingrefugees.com/instructional-programming/resources/>
- 🌐 Teaching Refugees with Limited Formal Schooling, “School Challenges”
<http://teachingrefugees.com/student-background/school-challenges/>

- 🌐 Teaching Refugees with Limited Formal Schooling, “Students with Limited Formal Schooling”
<http://teachingrefugees.com/student-background/limited-schooling/>

- 📰 Caroline Alphonso and Simona Chiose, “Finding Sanctuary: Why education is challenging but crucial for Syrian refugees” (The Globe and Mail, 5 January 2017)
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/syrian-refugees-to-canada-and-education/article33237207/>

- 📌 Caring for Kids New to Canada, “Community Resources Serving Immigrant and Refugee Families”
<http://www.kidsnewtocanada.ca/beyond/resources>

- 🌐 Immigrant Services Calgary, “Family Support”
<http://www.immigrantservicescalgary.ca/how-can-we-help/family-support>

- 🌐 Options Community Services, “First Steps Early Years Settlement Program”
<http://www.options.bc.ca/families-children/first-steps-early-years-settlement-program>

- 🌐 Regina Open Door Society, “Settlement, Family & Community Services (SFC)”
<http://rods.sk.ca/pages/services>

(ii) WHAT ARE THE EDUCATION NEEDS OF ADULT REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Adults may have various education needs. These include language training, skills upgrading, finishing secondary school and/or post-secondary education, and participation in programs aimed at updating existing credentials to meet requirements in Canada. Some refugee adults may have limited formal education in their country of nationality, and limited literacy.

DETAIL

Adult education is not compulsory or free although special scholarships may be available. Many school boards in Canada offer special day, night, or summer high school classes for a fee to help adults prepare for their General Education Development (GED) test and obtain their high school diploma. In many instances, high school diplomas may be required in order to access employment or further education opportunities.

In addition to the pressures and stresses of adapting to life in their new community, adult refugees may also experience mental health issues and trauma that may affect their educational outcomes. Educators should work closely with the settlement and health sectors to ensure that refugees are receiving holistic support, leading to better integration outcomes.

RESOURCES

-  RSTP, "Education"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/education/>

-  Caroline Alphonso and Simona Chiose, "Finding Sanctuary: Why education is challenging but crucial for Syrian refugees" (The Globe and Mail, 5 January 2017)
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/syrian-refugees-to-canada-and-education/article33237207/>

-  Settlement.org, "Adult Education"
<http://settlement.org/ontario/education/adult-education/>

-  Canadian Centre for International Credentials
<https://www.cicic.ca/868/Search-the-Directory-of-Educational-Institutions-in-Canada/index.canada>

-  Literacy BC, Learning Together: A Guide to Community-Based Adult ESL & Literacy in British Columbia
http://decoda.ca/wp-content/uploads/LearningTogether_final.pdf

-  Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Adult Refugees and Newcomers in the Inner City of Winnipeg: Promising Pathways for Transformative Learning"
[https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Manitoba Office/2011/02/Adult Refugees and Newcomers Winnipeg.pdf](https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Manitoba%20Office/2011/02/Adult%20Refugees%20and%20Newcomers%20Winnipeg.pdf)

-  Settlement.org, "Where can I take high school courses as an adult?"
<http://settlement.org/ontario/education/adult-education/get-a-high-school-diploma-adults/where-can-i-take-high-school-courses-as-an-adult/>

🌐 Independent Learning Centre, "GED Testing"
<http://www.ilc.org/ged/>

(iii) WHAT REQUIREMENTS MUST SPONSORED REFUGEES MEET TO ENROLL IN PRIMARY, SECONDARY, AND POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Primary and secondary education is compulsory for children until they turn sixteen or eighteen (depending on the province) or until they achieve their secondary school diploma. To enroll children in public elementary or secondary schools, refugees must provide proof of child's age, address, guardianship, immigration status and immunization record. Depending on their language capabilities, children may be enrolled in specialized classes to improve their language skills before transitioning to regular classes.

To access post-secondary institutions, individuals must typically have a high school diploma or the equivalent, and meet specific program requirements such as prerequisite classes and minimum grade point averages. Post-secondary institutions charge tuition, which varies by province, and type of institution and program. There are a number of initiatives, scholarships, and bursaries offered by universities, colleges, and other organizations to help qualified refugees access post-secondary education.

DETAIL

Education is compulsory until the age of eighteen in Ontario, New Brunswick, and Manitoba, and until the age of sixteen in the rest of the provinces and territories, or until children achieve their secondary school diploma. In Quebec, children are required to have a strong grasp of French before entering the public school system. Specialized bridging programs are available to ensure refugees and other immigrants gain language skills before starting regular classes. An example is the Literacy Enrichment Academic Program (LEAP) implemented by the Toronto District School Board, or the Literacy, English and Academic Development (LEAD) program implemented by the Calgary Board of Education. These are specialized, intensified language courses for refugee children before integrating them into regular classes.

Some adult education opportunities may require a language assessment, including government-funded English programs, and colleges, universities and professional licensing bodies. Refugees must have foreign education credentials assessed to determine their equivalence in the Canadian post-secondary education system. Organizations like the International Credentials Assessment Service and World Education Service help evaluate foreign-earned credentials and compare them to requirements of Canadian post-secondary schools.

Through services funded via Canada's Settlement Program, and delivered by settlement service provider organizations, settlement workers help refugees in determining a plan to obtain further credentials. These services include helping refugee access language training and identifying appropriate skills training (e.g. computer skills training). Adult refugees lacking secondary school credentials may prepare for the General Educational Development (GED) test to obtain a high school diploma.

RESOURCES

- 🌐 RSTP, "Education"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/education/>
- 🌐 Teaching Refugees with Limited Formal Schooling, "Instructional Resources"
<http://teachingrefugees.com/instructional-programming/resources/>

- 🌐 Settlement.org, “Where can I get my international credentials evaluated for employment?”
<http://settlement.org/ontario/education/evaluate-my-credentials/credential-evaluation/where-can-i-get-my-international-credentials-evaluated-for-employment/>

- 🌐 IRCC, “Educational Credential Assessment – Service Providers”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/partner/csp-intro.asp>

- 🌐 Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, “GED – High School Equivalency”
<http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/ged/>

- 🌐 Settlement.org, “What is GED/High School Equivalency Certificate?”
<http://settlement.org/ontario/education/adult-education/get-a-high-school-diploma-adults/what-is-ged-high-school-equivalency-certificate/>

- 📰 “School program could help Syrian refugee children learn English” (CTV News, 15 December 2015)
<http://toronto.ctvnews.ca/school-program-could-help-syrian-refugee-children-learn-english-1.2702152>

- 📰 Louise Brown, “Schools key to helping Syrian refugee children settle in” (The Star, 18 November 2015)
<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/11/18/schools-key-to-helping-syrian-refugee-children-settle-in.html>

- 🌐 Teaching Refugees with Limited Formal Schooling, “Lead programming: Calgary Board of Education Response to Serving Refugees with Limited Formal Schooling”
<http://teachingrefugees.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Description-of-LEAD-program.pdf>

(iv) HOW ARE FOREIGN CREDENTIALS ASSESSED?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Foreign qualification recognition is the process of verifying that the knowledge, skills, work experience, and education obtained in another country is comparable to the standards established for Canadian professionals and tradespersons. In Canada, foreign credentials are assessed by specialized organizations. Specific credentialing bodies also exist for different professions. These organizations evaluate documentary evidence to determine if an individual's qualifications are not substantially different from Canadian standards and requirements.

DETAIL

In Canada, there are a multitude of players involved in credential assessment and qualification recognition. This includes regulatory bodies, post-secondary educational institutions, and employers. Some occupations in Canada are regulated to protect public health and safety, and internationally trained individuals, including refugees, need to obtain licensure or certification from a regulatory body to work legally in these occupations.

The qualification recognition process can be complex and timelines can vary from a few days or weeks to several years. Refugees must submit proof of their language proficiency, education (transcripts) and work experience, and may also need to undertake written, oral, or practical examinations. Some refugees may need to upgrade their education or get on-the-job experience to obtain qualification recognition or licensure required to work in their intended occupation.

Canada's Settlement Program also provides pre-arrival and in-Canada services to assist refugees with foreign qualification recognition, licensure, and employment pathways. Provincial governments may also provide additional or complementary supports to assist refugees with qualification recognition and employment.

Foreign credentials are assessed by specialized organizations. Specific credentialing bodies also exist for different professions. These organizations evaluate documentary evidence to determine if an individual's qualifications are not substantially different from Canadian standards and requirements.

Refugee situations often result in important documents that are traditionally required to verify foreign credentials being left behind or destroyed. Canada's experience of resettling Syrian refugees in 2015-2016 led to further refinement in best practices and incorporating flexibility into policies, procedures, and document requirements for credential assessment organizations assisting refugees who do not possess documentary evidence of their foreign credentials. Alternative assessment approaches include: the use of sworn affidavits, background papers, and published research; verification of skills through reference letters; verification through direct contact with foreign embassies or academic institutions; competency-based assessments, exams or interviews; and Recognition of Prior Learning Assessment (RPL) approaches that allow individuals to identify, document, and gain recognition for their prior learning which may be formal, informal, or experiential.

RESOURCES

- IRCC, "Settlement Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/grants-contributions-funding/settlement-priorities.asp>
- The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, "Assessing the Qualifications of Refugees"
<https://www.cicic.ca/1616/assessing-the-qualifications-of-refugees/index.canada>

- 🌐 World Education Services
<https://www.wes.org/ca/>

- 🌐 IRCC, “Educational Credential Assessment – Service Providers”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/partner/csp-intro.asp>

- 🌐 World Education Services “Refugee Pilot Project”
<http://www.wes.org/ca/refugee/>

- 📄 World Education Services “Providing Pathways for Refugees: Practical Tips for Credential Assessment”
<http://wenr.wes.org/2016/04/providing-pathways-for-refugees-practical-tips-for-credential-assessment>

- 🌐 University of Toronto, “Comparative Education Service”
<http://learn.utoronto.ca/international-professionals/comparative-education-service-ces>

- 🌐 Government of Alberta, “IQAS assessment for immigration purposes”
<https://www.alberta.ca/iqas-immigration.aspx>

- 🌐 British Columbia Institute of Technology, “International Credential Evaluation Service”
<http://www.bcit.ca/ices/eca/>

- 🌐 Settlement.org, “Where can I get my international credentials evaluated for education?”
<http://settlement.org/ontario/education/evaluate-my-credentials/credential-evaluation/where-can-i-get-my-international-credentials-evaluated-for-education/>

- 🌐 Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, “Alternate Credential Assessment – Increasing Access for Refugees”
<http://triec.ca/alternate-credential-assessment-increasing-access-for-refugees/>

(v) WHO COVERS COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH FOREIGN CREDENTIAL EQUIVALENCY ASSESSMENTS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Refugees are generally responsible for paying the costs of their foreign credential assessments. In some circumstances, organizations may waive or reduce the fees associated with foreign credentials assessment. Sponsoring groups may also offer to cover the costs although they are not legally obligated to.

DETAIL

The cost of foreign credential equivalency assessments varies by organization. In some circumstances, credential assessment organizations or regulatory bodies may waive or reduce assessment fees for refugees.

Depending on the services required, costs for a complete qualification assessment process could range from as little as \$90 to as much as \$7,000, with even higher costs noted for regulated occupations. These costs could be related to an application and registration fees, assessment fees, oral or written examinations, translation of transcripts or work experience documents, and fees for academic or bridging programs.

As of 2018, high-skilled refugees may be eligible for a loan to cover the cost of the foreign credential equivalency process. Loans can be used for; but are not limited to, qualification assessments, association and exam fees, books and course materials, short-term bridge training, travel expenses, and living allowance.

Canada will provide funding to local community organizations that will assess the eligibility of individuals and manage the funding. A recipient may receive up to \$15,000. Some provincial governments also offer loan programs to assist with the cost of credential recognition.

In some circumstances, private funders have contributed funds to cover the costs of credentials assessment for refugees. For example, in a recent pilot project for Syrian refugees, costs associated with assessments were covered by Intact Financial Corporation and in-kind donations by World Education Services.

This pilot project, co-administered by the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, Intact Financial Corporation, and World Education Services, aimed to develop alternative mechanisms to assess refugees' foreign credentials in recognition that many refugees may not possess documentary evidence of their education.

RESOURCES

-  World Education Services "Providing Pathways for Refugees: Practical Tips for Credential Assessment"
<http://wenr.wes.org/2016/04/providing-pathways-for-refugees-practical-tips-for-credential-assessment>

-  Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, "Alternate Credential Assessment – Increasing Access for Refugees"
<http://triec.ca/alternate-credential-assessment-increasing-access-for-refugees/>

-  YMCA of Cambridge and Kitchener-Waterloo, "Credential Assessment"
<http://www.wrwelcomesrefugees.ca/en/resourcesGeneral/Credential-Assessment.pdf>

 World Education Services, "Fees"
<http://www.wes.org/ca/eca/fees/>

(vi) DO SPONSORED REFUGEES NEED LEGAL AUTHORIZATION TO STUDY?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsored refugees do not need legal authorization to study. As permanent residents upon arrival, they have the right to study anywhere in Canada as long as they meet admission requirements like other Canadian citizens and permanent residents (see 2.C.1(ii)).

DETAIL

In Quebec, students must meet French language requirements to attend school. Quebec's *Charter of the French Language* states that all children must be educated in French until the end of their secondary studies. Some exceptions apply where children attend school in English.

Programs are available for students that require additional language support before commencing regular classes (see 2.C.6(i)).

RESOURCES

- 🔍 IRCC, "Understand permanent resident status"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/about-pr.asp>

- 🔍 RSTP, "Education"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/education/>

- 📰 Giuseppe Valiante, "Syrian refugees learning French before going to school" (CTV News, 19 February 2016)
<http://montreal.ctvnews.ca/syrian-refugees-learning-french-before-going-to-school-1.2785224>

- 🔍 Quebec Ministry of Education, "Legislation"
<http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/contenus-communs/education/instruction-in-english/legislation/>

- 🔍 Quebec Ministry of Education, "Instruction in English"
<http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/contenus-communs/education/instruction-in-english/eligibility/>

(vii) WHO COVERS TUITION AND OTHER EDUCATION EXPENSES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Primary and secondary education is publicly funded by Canadian provinces and refugees can access schooling free of cost. Private sponsors are expected to cover initial school start-up costs. Post-secondary students, including refugees, must pay tuition and other school expenses, though as permanent residents they are eligible for provincial financial assistance through loans, grants, bursaries, and scholarships.

DETAIL

Primary and secondary education is publicly funded by Canadian provinces and refugees can access schooling free of cost. Private sponsors are expected to cover initial school start-up costs, including school supplies such as books, stationary, utensils, school uniforms (if applicable), etc.

Post-secondary students, including refugees, must pay tuition and other school expenses. Refugees do not need to pay international student fees. As permanent residents, they are eligible for provincial student loans, grants, bursaries, and scholarships. Most universities and colleges offer bursaries and scholarships to qualifying refugee students. For example, in 2015 the National Association of Career Colleges offered \$2 million worth of scholarships to cover the tuition of 200 Syrian refugees.

Numerous organizations and businesses also fund scholarships for refugees. World University Services of Canada is another organization that mobilizes student bodies across the country to pay small levies towards sponsoring and paying the educational costs of qualifying post-secondary refugee students.

RESOURCES

-  Amanda Pfeffer, "Canada's private colleges offer 200 full scholarships to refugees" (CBC News, 24 November 2015)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/canada-s-private-colleges-offer-200-full-scholarships-to-refugees-1.3332137>
-  RSTP, "Education"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/education/>
-  RSTP, "Fact Sheet: Sponsorship Cost Table"
http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Fact_Sheet_7.3_Sponsorship_Cost_Table_March2014.pdf
-  Citizens for Public Justice, "Helping refugee students apply for Canadian student loans for college and university"
<https://cpj.ca/files/docs/genguide3.pdf>
-  IRCC, "Can resettled refugees apply for student loans?"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=093&top=11>
-  NewYouth.ca, "Can I Apply for OSAP as a Refugee?"
<http://www.newyouth.ca/school/high-school/can-i-apply-osap-refugee>

- 🌐 Scholarships Canada
<http://www.scholarshipscanada.com/>

- 🌐 Settlement.org, "What kinds of financial help can I get for my education?"
<http://settlement.org/ontario/education/colleges-universities-and-institutes/financial-assistance-for-post-secondary-education/what-kinds-of-financial-help-can-i-get-for-my-education/>

- 🌐 WUSC, "Student Refugee Program"
<https://srp.wusc.ca/>

(viii) WHAT SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND RESOURCES ARE IN PLACE FOR TEACHERS IN CLASSES WITH REFUGEE STUDENTS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada's Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program places workers from settlement organizations in schools to provide support to newcomer students, including refugees. SWIS workers also support school staff in integrating refugee students into the school environment.

Teachers may also access electronic resources such as publications, educational materials, guidebooks and examples from the field to help them address the needs of refugee children in their classrooms. For example, the ESL Literacy Network is an online community that provides resources and information for English as a Second Language (ESL) literacy practitioners. It also offers workshops on strategies for teaching refugees and addressing trauma in the classroom. Depending on their learning needs, some refugee students may also have an education assistant in the classroom.

DETAIL

Education policy is managed at the provincial level, so curriculum, policy and resources vary by province. Some school boards and individual schools have developed tools and resources to assist teachers in classes with refugee students.

SWIS places workers from settlement organizations in schools to provide support and outreach to newcomer families whose children are enrolled in school. SWIS provides needs assessments, action planning, information, orientation, and supported referrals to specialized community services and resources to support the settlement process. SWIS assists students in learning about the school setting and empowers them to succeed. It helps families understand the basics of the school system, and provides information and referral on other aspects of life in Canada. SWIS also assists school staff to see the school and its requirements through refugees' eyes, offers training, and helps them develop an awareness and sensitivity to the issues refugees encounter.

RESOURCES

- 🌐 British Columbia Ministry of Education, "Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers and Schools"
<http://www.torontolip.com/Portals/0/Resources/Education/SyriaCountryProfile.pdf?ver=2016-02-23-122354-327>
- 🌐 Teaching Refugees with Limited Formal Schooling
<http://teachingrefugees.com/student-background/canadas-refugess/>
- 🌐 Courtney A. Brewer, "An outline for including refugees in Canadian educational policy" (Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education, 2016)
<https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/cjnse/article/view/30706>
- 🏠 "An Educator's Guide to Welcoming Syrian Refugee Children" (The Education Leader, 28 September 2016)
<http://www.bcsta.org/TheLeader/index.php/2016/09/28/an-educators-guide-to-welcoming-syrian-refugee-children/>
- 🌐 ESL Literacy Network
<https://centre.bowvalleycollege.ca/networks/esl-literacy-network>

- SWIS, program in Saskatchewan, Thames Valley District School Board (Ontario)
<http://www.tvdsb.ca/programs.cfm?subpage=123449>

- SWIS, New Westminster School District (British Columbia)
<https://www.mosaicbc.org/services/family-children-youth/settlement-workers-schools/>

(ix) WHAT BARRIERS TO EDUCATION DO RESETTLED REFUGEES FACE AND HOW CAN CURRICULUMS AND APPROACHES TO EDUCATION BE TAILORED TO MEET THEIR NEEDS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Key barriers to learning for resettled refugees include lack of academic support, separation from family, cultural dissonance, limited language proficiency, academic gaps due to disrupted schooling, discrimination, fear and distrust of authority figures, and grade placement based on language assessment rather than academic ability.

To address these barriers, curriculums can include promoting better understanding of refugee situations and a culture of acceptance in schools. School administrators and staff should pay special attention to grade placement of refugee students relative to their age. They should also provide support to refugee students and monitor the attitudes and behaviors of other students to ensure that new students experience a welcoming environment and are not subject to bullying or harassment.

Research also suggests that schools can support refugee students by making better links to community supports and by taking additional steps to engage parents in culturally sensitive ways. Many schools across Canada partner with the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) programs that supports school staff, students and parents in empowering refugee students to succeed. SWIS programs also support successful integration outcomes by connecting families with relevant community supports outside of the classroom.

DETAIL

Approaches to education for refugees vary by jurisdiction. A barrier that refugees face to optimal education outcomes is the extent to which teachers and schools have the skills resources to support them. Some localized strategies exist (see 2.C.6(iii)). For example, in Quebec, refugee children attend specialized classes to improve language skills before attending regular school. See 2.C.6(viii) for more information about supports teachers can access to help them address the needs of refugee children in the classroom.

Many schools across Canada partner with the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program. SWIS supports students, school staff, and parents in learning about and adjusting to the school environment, and empowering students to succeed. For more information about the SWIS program, see 2.C.6(viii).

RESOURCES

-  British Columbia Ministry of Education, "Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers and Schools"
<http://www.torontolip.com/Portals/0/Resources/Education/SyriaCountryProfile.pdf?ver=2016-02-23-122354-327>
-  Giuseppe Valiante, "Syrian refugees in Quebec's French-integration classes learning fast, having fun" (Winnipeg Free Press, 29 February 2016)
<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/canada/syrian-refugees-in-quebecs-french-integration-classes-learning-fast-having-fun-369438432.html>
-  Teaching Refugees with Limited Formal Schooling
<http://teachingrefugees.com/student-background/canadas-refugess/>

- 🌐 Courtney A. Brewer, "An outline for including refugees in Canadian educational policy" (Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education, 2016)
<https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/cjnse/article/view/30706>

- 👤 "An Educator's Guide to Welcoming Syrian Refugee Children" (The Education Leader, 28 September 2016)
<http://www.bcsta.org/TheLeader/index.php/2016/09/28/an-educators-guide-to-welcoming-syrian-refugee-children/>

- 🌐 SWIS, program in Saskatchewan, Thames Valley District School Board (Ontario)
<http://www.tvdsb.ca/programs.cfm?subpage=123449>

- 🌐 SWIS, New Westminster School District (British Columbia)
<https://www.mosaicbc.org/services/family-children-youth/settlement-workers-schools/>

(x) WHAT CAN SCHOOLS DO TO WELCOME REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada's resettlement of 25,000 Syrian refugees in 2015-2016 prompted a variety of welcoming responses from schools across Canada to welcome refugees, including enhancements to pre-existing in-school supports such as:

- Trauma counselling;
- Targeted support from and for teachers to assist refugee students in understanding expected conduct within schools (e.g. use of bathroom facilities, communication with adults, handling classroom materials);
- Minimizing potential triggers related to previous trauma such as dark corridors and explaining bells, fire alarms, and evacuation drills;
- Forging connections between teachers and parents including through the use of translated materials;
- Supporting teachers' professional learning;
- Developing enhanced learning supports to meet individual needs; and
- Expanding community networks for targeted services, including through the use of cultural brokers, interpreters, settlement workers, and cultural liaison workers.

DETAIL

A number of schools in Canada have taken extra steps to welcome refugees. For example, some school boards across the country transferred staff fluent in Arabic to schools with a high population of Syrian students to assist children and parents from Syria in adjusting to their new environment. As part of their strategy to put children at ease, students are not discouraged from speaking Arabic to one another. Other schools, e.g. Dewson Street Public School in Toronto, have taken the initiative to engage their student bodies to directly sponsor refugees themselves.

Some school boards in provinces across Canada leveraged the work of community agencies including settlement organizations to provide services targeted to students and their families. Services include a Wellness Hub, which serves as a hub for school counselling, a refugee transition centre to teach Canadian life skills, and training for teachers to attend workshops on war-affected students. Other supports include after school programs for parents, students and other community members, on-site social support workers and prayer rooms. Many schools across Canada also partner with Settlement Workers in Schools, which places workers from settlement organizations in schools to provide holistic support to refugee students, parents, and school staff to promote successful integration into the school environment and community more broadly (see 2.C.6(viii)).

RESOURCES

 Steve Fischer, "Syrian children find comfort in numbers at Ottawa elementary school" (CBC News, 15 December 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/syrian-refugee-carson-grove-school-elementary-1.3895806>

 Teaching Refugees with Limited Formal Schooling
<http://teachingrefugees.com/student-background/canadas-refugess/>

 "An Educator's Guide to Welcoming Syrian Refugee Children" (The Education Leader, 28 September 2016)
<http://www.bcsta.org/TheLeader/index.php/2016/09/28/an-educators-guide-to-welcoming-syrian-refugee-children/>

 Louise Brown, "Toronto students unite to help Syrian refugees" (The Star, 22 September 2015)
<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/09/22/toronto-students-unite-to-help-syrian-refugees.html>

(xi) WHAT PREPARATORY PROGRAMS SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH EDUCATION GAPS AND LANGUAGE BARRIERS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The main preparatory program that supports successful education outcomes for adults is language training (see 2.C.8). Adults can also earn their high school diploma, enabling them to access post-secondary education.

For children, some provinces have developed specialized programs to assist refugees and other newcomers to Canada. Several initiatives have emerged in various school boards and provinces to provide specialized language classes to enable refugees to smoothly transition to regular classes. Other initiatives include the development of specialized curricula and grants to help students who have experienced gaps in schooling catch up to their age group.

DETAIL

As permanent residents, refugees may access language training at no cost through the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada. Local settlement service providers refer refugees to language assessments centres where refugees will be assessed for language proficiency and referred to classes in their community (See 2.C.8). Adult refugees lacking secondary school credentials may prepare for the General Educational Development (GED) test to obtain a high school diploma and become eligible for post-secondary education. They may also attend adult high school programs.

Examples of local and provincial initiatives to support education outcomes for refugee students include:

- An initiative that places refugee students in a specialized program for half the day with the remainder of the day spent in mainstream courses;
- Offering specialized, intensive programs such as the Literacy Enrichment Academic Program (LEAP) implemented by the Toronto District School Board, or the Literacy, English and Academic Development (LEAD) program implemented by the Calgary Board of Education, that focus on language, academic foundations, and orientation.
- One program – the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters – assists parents in preparing their younger children for kindergarten and the beginning of their school life, as well as providing opportunities to parents to gain Canadian employment skills.

Some jurisdictions have also developed individual education plans that outline a special education program and/or services required by a particular student. These programs are offered to all students with special needs, including refugees. In almost 3,000 locations across Canada, settlement workers are placed in schools through the Settlement Workers in Schools program (see 2.C.6(viii)) to support refugee students, their parents, and school staff. Many schools have also hired interpreters to support refugee students.

RESOURCES

-  Giuseppe Valiante, "Syrian refugees in Quebec's French-integration classes learning fast, having fun" (Winnipeg Free Press, 29 February 2016)
<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/canada/syrian-refugees-in-quebecs-french-integration-classes-learning-fast-having-fun-369438432.html>

-  "An Educator's Guide to Welcoming Syrian Refugee Children" (The Education Leader, 28 September 2016)
<http://www.bcsta.org/TheLeader/index.php/2016/09/28/an-educators-guide-to-welcoming-syrian-refugee-children/>

-  Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, "GED – High School Equivalency"
<http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/ged/>

-  Settlement.org, "What is GED/High School Equivalency Certificate?"
<http://settlement.org/ontario/education/adult-education/get-a-high-school-diploma-adults/what-is-ged-high-school-equivalency-certificate/>

-  "School program could help Syrian refugee children learn English" (CTV News, 15 December 2015)
<http://toronto.ctvnews.ca/school-program-could-help-syrian-refugee-children-learn-english-1.2702152>

-  Louise Brown, "Schools key to helping Syrian refugee children settle in" (The Star, 18 November 2015)
<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/11/18/schools-key-to-helping-syrian-refugee-children-settle-in.html>

-  Mothers Matter Center, "Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters"
<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/home-instruction-for-parents-of-preschool-youngsters-hippy-canada/>

-  Mothers Matter Center, "How Hippy Works"
<http://www.mothersmattercentre.ca/program/>

-  IRCC, "Language classes funded by the Government of Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/language.asp>

C.7 HOW IS CULTURAL ORIENTATION TREATED?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider the various supports and resources for refugees to learn about and integrate into the culture of the resettlement country.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What supports are in place to promote orientation? Who provides them?
- (ii) How can refugees preserve their cultural heritage while adapting to life in their resettlement country?
- (iii) What resources are available to help orient refugees?
- (iv) Are there orientation resources and services tailored to refugees' age, language, and gender?

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>
-  Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>
-  RSTP, "Supporting Settlement and Integration"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/supporting-settlement-and-integration-2/>
-  RSTP, "Cross Cultural Participant Guide"
<https://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/crossculturalparticipantguide.pdf>

(i) WHAT SUPPORTS ARE IN PLACE TO PROMOTE ORIENTATION? WHO PROVIDES THEM?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Supports in place to promote economic, social, and cultural participation and integration pre-arrival include the Canadian Orientation Abroad sessions delivered by the International Organization for Migration and communications with sponsors. Post-arrival, sponsors, Canadian family members of refugees, settlement agencies, services like language training and public schools, and other community, cultural, and diaspora organizations all play important roles in helping refugees integrate into economic, social, and cultural life in Canada.

DETAIL

PRE-ARRIVAL: Refugees attend Canadian Orientation Abroad sessions delivered by the International Organization for Migration. These sessions help refugees prepare for life in Canada, develop realistic expectations, make informed settlement decisions, and contact other available supports. Pre-arrival communication with sponsors is also beneficial as sponsors can help answer refugees' questions about their community of resettlement, prepare them for arrival in Canada, and help manage refugees' expectations about what life will be like in Canada.

POST ARRIVAL: There are also post arrival supports to promote economic, social, and cultural participation and integration of refugees. Sponsors undertake to provide settlement services to help refugees adjust to life in Canada. They are central in promoting orientation as through their day-to-day interactions with sponsored refugees, they provide emotional and moral support, settlement assistance, and cross-cultural exchange and understanding. Sponsors play an important role in introducing refugees to social activities in the community, where refugees can participate and contribute actively and develop their own social networks. Some resettled refugees have family members in Canada who play a vital role in promoting orientation because they tend to speak the same languages and can more easily help refugees adjust to life in Canada.

Before and soon after arrival, sponsors should explain clearly to the sponsored refugees their roles and responsibilities during the sponsorship undertaking period. Sponsors should review the Settlement Plan with the refugees and clarify which individual sponsor has taken on which settlement task so that refugees know what to expect and who to turn to when issues arise.

A network of settlement agencies funded by provincial, territorial, and federal governments across Canada also provide settlement programming that supports the full participation of refugees in the economic, social, cultural, and civic life in Canada. They also connect refugees with other services promoting orientation that support their integration, including language training and schooling (see, e.g. 2.C.6(x)).

Other community organizations provide programming to help orient refugees and to help them build networks and a sense of community. For example, YMCAs across Canada provide settlement services and facilitates recreational activities and community-building events for refugees. Cultural and diaspora organizations also offer orientation, information, accompaniment, cultural supports, recreational, and cultural activities to bridge refugees with community members and service providers in the community.

Economic, social, and cultural participation and integration must involve two-way cross-cultural communications and adaptation not only by refugees, but also by sponsors, settlement workers, and other members of Canadian society. Sponsors should remember that their role is to provide support in full respect of the refugees' dignity and right to autonomy; the goal is to facilitate and empower refugees to make decisions about their own lives.

RESOURCES

-  RSTP, "Supporting Settlement and Integration"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/supporting-settlement-and-integration-2/>

-  Canadian Council for Refugees, "Best Settlement Practices: Settlement Services for Refugees and Immigrants in Canada"
<http://ccrweb.ca/sites/ccrweb.ca/files/static-files/bpfina1.htm>

-  YMCA Canada, "Building Communities for Syrian Refugees"
http://ymca.ca/CWP/media/YMCA-National/Documents/Standalone_documents/YMCA_SyrianSpecialReport_2016_ENG-final.pdf

-  Guming Zhao for the Multicultural Coalition, "The Experience of Ethnocultural Communities in Supporting Newcomers in Edmonton: A Community Research"
<http://www.emcoalition.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/The-experience-of-ethnocultural-communities-in-supporting-new-comers-in-Edmonton2009.pdf>

-  IRCC, "Canadian Orientation Abroad"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/partner/bpss/COA.asp>

(ii) HOW CAN REFUGEES PRESERVE THEIR CULTURAL HERITAGE WHILE ADAPTING TO LIFE IN THEIR RESETTLEMENT COUNTRY?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada has a policy of multiculturalism rooted in the fundamental belief that all people are equal. Multiculturalism enables all Canadian citizens and permanent residents to maintain their linguistic, cultural, and religious differences and encourages Canadians to maintain family and cultural traditions consistent with Canadian values. Canada supports a two-way street of integration, which allows newcomers to develop a sense of belonging while enabling institutions and community members to better understand the contributions of refugees and the challenges they face.

DETAIL

Multiculturalism encourages full integration into Canadian society and active participation in social, cultural, and political affairs. Refugees may continue to practice and celebrate their traditions, while respecting Canada's political and legal process, human rights, and equality before the law. Issues should be addressed by Canadian legal and constitutional means.

Refugee integration into Canadian society is supported through education, employment, language acquisition, cross-cultural understanding and by fulfilling rights and obligations as permanent residents. Refugees are free to practice their traditions that are consistent with Canadian law. Practices that are not tolerated include spousal abuse, honor killings, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and other forms of gender-based violence.

Sponsors play an important role in the economic, social, and cultural participation and integration of refugees. Not only do they introduce refugees to important services, but also to social activities in the community in which the refugees can participate and contribute actively and develop their own social networks.

Orientation must involve two-way cross-cultural communications and adaptations by not only refugees to Canadian culture. Sponsors, settlement workers, and other members of Canadian society must also welcome, accept, and learn from refugees' traditions and the challenges they face. Sponsors should remember that their role is to provide support in full respect of the refugees' dignity and right to self-determination; the goal is to facilitate and empower refugees to make decisions about their own lives according to their own beliefs.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>

-  RSTP, "Supporting Settlement and Integration"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/supporting-settlement-and-integration-2/>

-  RSTP, "Cross Cultural Participant Guide"
<https://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/crossculturalparticipantguide.pdf>

-  IRCC, "Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/discover/index.asp>

🌐 Government of Canada, "Multiculturalism"

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/culture/canadian-identity-society/multiculturalism.html>

(iii) WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP ORIENT REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Non-profit organizations, including settlement support agencies, provide videos, guidelines and workshops on integration. These resources often outline key considerations for sponsors in terms of interacting with refugees in culturally sensitive ways and providing culturally appropriate support (e.g. providing orientation and information; giving empathy and support; sharing information and cultural practices like foods; traditions; speaking transparently about cross-cultural miscommunications and addressing them collaboratively; connecting with trauma specialists; and being aware of and challenging assumptions).

Canada also provides a number of useful resources for sponsors on orientation for refugees, and funds service providers to offer one-on-one, family, and group orientation sessions to assist permanent residents in all aspects of settling in Canada (e.g. housing, education, health care).

DETAIL

The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) provides a variety of videos, guidelines, and workshops on integration. RSTP trainers are also available to answer sponsors' questions and help them resolve issues involving cross-cultural miscommunications during the sponsorship period.

Local settlement workers are available to help refugees adapt to all aspects of life in Canada, including language training, housing, education, health care, etc. For example, the Settlement Workers in Schools program places resettlement workers in primary and secondary schools to provide targeted support to newcomer children adjusting to Canada's educational system (see 2.C.6(viii)).

Local immigration offices are also available to help sponsors and refugees navigate disputes, including ones arising out of cross-cultural miscommunications, and promote two-way orientation (see 2.D.2(ii)).

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>

-  RSTP, "Supporting Settlement and Integration"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/supporting-settlement-and-integration-2/>

-  IRCC, "Find free newcomer services near you"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/services/index.asp>

-  RSTP, "Cross Cultural Participant Guide"
<https://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/crossculturalparticipantguide.pdf>

-  IRCC, Youtube channel
<https://www.youtube.com/user/CitImmCanada>

 Regional Connections, "Syrian Culture, Canadian Culture, and Integration"
<http://regionalconnections.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Session-2-Cultures-and-Integration-2.pdf>

(iv) ARE THERE ORIENTATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES TAILORED TO REFUGEES' AGE, LANGUAGE, AND GENDER?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada's pre-departure orientation program for refugees includes a youth-only session focused on issues such as schooling, making new friends, working part-time and volunteering, recreational activities, attitudes at school and home, education and getting help, and wants versus needs.

The Government of Canada funds service providers to both one-on-one, family, and group orientation sessions to assist refugees in all aspects of settling in Canada (e.g. housing, education, health care). Some of these services are specifically tailored to newcomer women, youth, and seniors, recognizing that targeted interventions are needed to improve integration outcomes for vulnerable groups.

A number of organizations have prepared orientation resources and sessions for refugees and other newcomers. These resources often make reference to considerations for different groups within the community such as women. In some locations, orientation workshops have been developed for specific religions and immigrant populations.

DETAIL

Canada's Settlement Program provides specialized services for newcomer women, youth, and seniors, recognizing that targeted interventions are needed to improve integration outcomes for vulnerable groups:

- Programming for newcomer youth includes mentoring, leadership training, social connections activities, employment supports and skills development. Settlement Workers in Schools places settlement workers from community agencies in schools across Canada (see 2.C.6(viii)).
- Services for women include information and orientation on rights and responsibilities, women-only employment and language supports, family and gender-based violence supports, and child-minding and transportation assistance to ensure that mothers are able to access integration services.
- Settlement services specific to seniors include conversation circles, computer training sessions to help seniors connect with friends and families through email and learn to use search engines for their settlement needs, as well as workshops on elder abuse prevention. Further, information on seniors' rights, health and wellness, housing options, budgeting, the Canadian Pension Plan and other available benefits are provided.

Ethno-cultural and diaspora organizations also provide support to specific immigrant communities and groups within those communities.

RESOURCES

 Canadian Orientation Abroad, "COA creates a new initiative for Youth Refugees"
<http://www.coa-oce.ca/coa-creates-a-new-initiative-for-youth-refugees/>

 Immigrant Services Society of BC, A New Start: Refugee Youth Pre-Departure Orientation Pilot Program
https://issbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/a-new-start-sept_2011.pdf

-  Todd, Douglas, "Douglas Todd: Immigrant workshops in Vancouver face up to difficulties of integration" (Vancouver Sun, 21 July 2016)
<http://vancouversun.com/opinion/columnists/douglas-todd-immigrant-workshops-in-vancouver-face-up-to-difficulties-of-integration>

-  Social Planning Council of Ottawa, "Best Practices In Supporting the Integration of Immigrant Families Through Small Ethno-cultural Organizations"
<https://www.spcottawa.on.ca/sites/all/files/pdf/2010/Publications/Best-Practices-Supporting-Immigran-Families-English.pdf>

-  Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization, "Immigrant Women Mentoring Network"
<https://ociso.org/immigrant-women-mentoring-network/>

-  Calgary Immigrant Woman's Association, "CIWA ready to serve Syrian refugee women and children"
<http://www.ciwa-online.com/component/content/article/201->

-  IRCC, "Helping vulnerable Yazidi women and children and other survivors of Daesh"
https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2017/02/helping_vulnerableyazidiwomenandchildrenandothersurvivorsofdaesh.html?=&wbdisable=true

-  Centre for Immigrant & Community Services, "Seniors"
<http://www.cicscanada.com/content/50/Seniors>

C.8 HOW IS LANGUAGE TREATED?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider how sponsored refugees will access language training services.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) How important is language acquisition for long-term outcomes for resettled refugees?
- (ii) What requirements must sponsored refugees meet to enroll in language training classes?
- (iii) Are there language learning services geared towards refugees already in place?
- (iv) Are language classes mandatory for sponsored refugees?
- (v) Who pays for language training services for sponsored refugees?
- (vi) Who handles language assessments?
- (vii) How should refugees balance language acquisition with employment searching?
- (viii) How accessible are language services in terms of distance from the refugees' residence, child care, etc?

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>
-  Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>
-  IRCC, "Language classes funded by the Government of Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/language.asp>
-  Ian Bonelli, "Language teachers preparing for influx of Syrian refugees: Private businesses are also preparing to help with second-language instructor for Syrian refugees" (CBC News, 27 November 2015)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/language-teachers-syrian-refugees-1.3339485>
-  Meera Vijayann, "'It was very hard': Learning English a struggle for Syrian refugees, and support not always there" (CBC News, 27 November 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/syrian-refugees-language-1.3864588>
-  YMCA Ottawa, "Language Assessment and Referral Centre"
<http://www.ymcaywca.ca/Adults/newcomerservices/languageassessment>

-  Government of Ontario, "Language Training"
<http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca/en/learn/index.htm>

-  Quebec Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion, "French courses for non-francophones"
<https://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/settle/french-courses.html>

-  Anita Bathe, "Millions worth of free English classes for Syrian refugees going unused" (CBC News, 2 May 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/free-english-classes-syrian-refugees-unused-1.3563341>

-  IRCC, "Language Training for Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/multimedia/video/settlement-language/settlement-language.asp>

-  IRCC, "Improving your English and French"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/improve-english-french.html>

-  IRCC, "Language classes funded by the Government of Canada"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/improve-english-french/classes.html>

-  IRCC, "Living in Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/lctvac/english/index>

-  IRCC, "Language Training for Canada"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7O924191k>

-  IRCC, "Language Training for Canada" transcript
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/video/language-training-canada.html>

(i) HOW IMPORTANT IS LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FOR LONG-TERM OUTCOMES FOR RESETTLED REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Language skills are critical to enable refugees to integrate successfully into Canadian society. Language enables refugees to build new friendship and community networks and is integral to obtaining meaningful employment commensurate with skills and experience. Gaining language skills helps refugees adjust to new school environments. Refugees must also have adequate knowledge of English or French to meet the language requirement for citizenship.

DETAIL

Language skills are critical to enable refugees to integrate successfully into Canadian society, particularly in terms of obtaining employment that matches existing skills and experience. Some job positions or post-secondary programs require proof of proficiency, such as results from a designated language test.

Language skills also facilitate social integration. Ability to communicate with sponsors, settlement workers, neighbours, classmates, and other sectors of society also helps refugees build important social and professional networks that contribute to successful integration. Ability to communicate, express oneself, and navigate the community independently promotes emotional wellbeing and sense of empowerment and belonging.

Language also helps refugees obtain citizenship. To become a Canadian citizen, sponsored refugees must show they have adequate speaking and listening skills in one of Canada's official languages, measured through the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) in English or Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens (NCLC) in French.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>

-  Viola Pruss, "Syrian newcomers agree language training is key to finding work" (CBC, 8 December 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/refugee-jobs-language-training-1.3887203>

-  RSTP, "Education"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/education/>

-  IRCC, "Language classes funded by the Government of Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/language.asp>

-  IRCC, "Language Training for Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/multimedia/video/settlement-language/settlement-language.asp>

-  Marie Delaney, "Can learning languages help refugees cope?" (British Council, 2016)
<https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/can-learning-languages-help-refugees-cope>

-  IRCC, Find out if you have the language proof you need to apply for citizenship
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/citizenship/language.asp>

(ii) WHAT REQUIREMENTS MUST SPONSORED REFUGEES MEET TO ENROLL IN LANGUAGE TRAINING CLASSES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsored refugees are entitled to access language training under the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and the Cours de Langue pour les Immigrants au Canada (CLIC) programs. To register, sponsored refugees must provide a copy of their Confirmation of Permanent Residence. They must also complete a language assessment prior to enrolling in language classes.

DETAIL

Sponsored refugees are entitled to access language training under the LINC and CLIC programs. To register, they must provide proof of their immigration status, in their case, their Confirmation of Permanent Residence. They must complete a language assessment prior to enrolling in classes. The purpose of the language assessments is to place the individual in the appropriate language class. Availability of higher instructional levels (e.g. occupation-specific, professional) may vary depending on the community.

Access to the LINC and CLIC programs continues until individuals become Canadian citizens. Other language programs offered by service providers as well as secondary and post-secondary institutions may have their own eligibility criteria.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>
-  RSTP, "Education"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/education/>
-  IRCC, "Language classes funded by the Government of Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/language.asp>
-  IRCC, "Backgrounder – Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/backgrounders/2013/2013-10-18.asp>
-  Catherine McIntyre, "For Newcomers, the Library is About More Than Just Books" (Torontoist, 7 April 2016)
<http://torontoist.com/2016/04/for-newcomers-the-library-is-about-so-much-more-than-a-books/>

(iii) ARE THERE LANGUAGE LEARNING SERVICES GEARED TOWARDS REFUGEES ALREADY IN PLACE?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Language learning services may be geared towards newcomers to Canada, including refugees. The Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and the Cours de Langue pour les Immigrants au Canada (CLIC) programs offer language classes nationwide to sponsored refugees with various levels of English or French. The LINC and CLIC programs provide newcomers with language instruction and information on how to settle in Canada (e.g. housing, banking, citizenship, and how to get a job). Sponsored refugees may access other language learning opportunities through the Settlement Program (e.g. conversation circles). Community organizations, school boards, public libraries, and post-secondary institutions may also provide language instruction. Sponsors can also provide informal language lessons and encourage conversation to practice language skills.

DETAIL

The LINC and CLIC programs offer language classes nationwide to sponsored refugees with various levels of English or French. Settlement agencies, community organizations, school boards, public libraries, and post-secondary institutions may also provide language instruction. To increase access to language instruction classes, Canada offers child-minding spaces in classes and transportation subsidies in certain locations. Classes for people with special needs may also be available.

LINC and CLIC program providers include community organizations, schools, and colleges. LINC and CLIC classes can be taken in-person or online on a full-time or part-time basis. Courses are taught from literacy to advanced language ability levels for all four language skill areas (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and are increasingly focused on labour market inclusion. The program offers day and evening classes. In some cases, refugees can access childminding services or transportation assistance to enable them to attend language training. Classes are based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks and Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens frameworks.

RESOURCES

- 📍 IRCC, "Language classes funded by the Government of Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/language.asp>

- 📰 Meera Vijayann, "It was very hard": Learning English a struggle for Syrian refugees, and support not always there" (CBC News, 27 November 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/syrian-refugees-language-1.3864588>

- 📍 IRCC, "Backgrounder – Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/backgrounders/2013/2013-10-18.asp>

- 📰 Catherine McIntyre, "For Newcomers, the Library is About More Than Just Books" (Torontoist, 7 April 2016)
<http://torontoist.com/2016/04/for-newcomers-the-library-is-about-so-much-more-than-a-books/>

- 📍 IRCC, "Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/francais/pdf/pub/competence-linguistique.pdf>

(iv) ARE LANGUAGE CLASSES MANDATORY FOR SPONSORED REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Participation in language training is not mandatory and does not impact permanent resident status. In some cases, individuals must demonstrate language proficiency to access employment and education opportunities. Citizenship applicants must also demonstrate adequate knowledge of English or French in speaking and listening skills.

DETAIL

Employers and regulators of professional organizations establish the language proficiency levels and acceptable proofs required for their occupations. When applying for a job or post-secondary education, refugees may need (or want) to provide proof of language proficiency. The results of third party language tests such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (CELPIP), and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) are examples of non government tests that may be recognized as proof of language ability.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>

-  Ron Charles "For Syrian refugees, finding job should take back seat to learning English, say agencies" CBC News (January 29, 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/syrian-refugees-jobs-1.3424351>

-  International English Language Testing System
<http://ieltscanadatest.com/>

-  Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (CELPIP)
<https://www.celpip.ca/>

-  Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
<https://www.ets.org/toefl>

(v) WHO PAYS FOR LANGUAGE TRAINING SERVICES FOR SPONSORED REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Language training services are generally funded by Canada's provincial and/or federal governments. Refugees can access these services at no cost to them or their sponsoring groups.

DETAIL

The Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and the Cours de Langue pour les Immigrants au Canada (CLIC) programs offer language classes nationwide to sponsored refugees with various levels of English or French. These programs are funded by Canada.

Settlement agencies, community organizations, school boards, public libraries, as well as secondary and post-secondary institutions may also provide language instruction. These services are typically funded by municipal and provincial governments.

Provincial non-credit adult English as a Second Language and French as a Second Language programs and adult skills training programs geared to labour market inclusion are also available to sponsored refugees.

Refugees can generally access language training for the above service providers at no cost to the former or their sponsoring groups.

In addition, fee-based language learning options are available to sponsored refugees. For example, sponsored refugees may choose to pay for English and French immersion programs offered at private language schools or pay tuition at post-secondary institutions. Sponsors are not expected to cover these costs.

RESOURCES

 IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>

 RSTP, "Education"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/education/>

 IRCC, "Language classes funded by the Government of Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/language.asp>

(vi) WHO HANDLES LANGUAGE ASSESSMENTS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Local settlement service providers refer refugees to language assessment centres where refugees are assessed for language proficiency in all four skills – reading, writing, oral, and listening comprehension – in English or French, to determine the most suitable language classes for them.

DETAIL

Local settlement service providers refer refugees to language assessment centres where refugees are assessed for language proficiency in all four skills – reading, writing, oral, and listening comprehension – in English or French, to determine the most suitable language classes for them.

The assessor will measure language skills based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks and Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens and provide a report with a recommendation for which level of language classes to register.

The Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and the Cours de Langue pour les Immigrants au Canada (CLIC) programs offer language classes nationwide to sponsored refugees with various levels of English or French. Settlement agencies, community organizations, school boards, public libraries, and post-secondary institutions may also provide language instruction.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, “Welcome to Canada: What you should know”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>
-  Capital Rainbow Refuge, “Settlement Plan for X&X”
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>
-  RSTP, “Education”
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/education/>
-  IRCC, “Language classes funded by the Government of Canada”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/language.asp>
-  IRCC, “Backgrounder – Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Program”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/backgrounders/2013/2013-10-18.asp>
-  Catherine McIntyre, “For Newcomers, the Library is About More Than Just Books” (Torontoist, 7 April 2016)
<http://torontoist.com/2016/04/for-newcomers-the-library-is-about-so-much-more-than-a-books/>
-  IRCC, “Canadian Language Benchmarks: English as a Second Language for Adults”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/language-benchmarks.pdf>
-  IRCC, “Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/francais/pdf/pub/competence-linguistique.pdf>

- 🌐 YMCA Greater Toronto Area, “English or French Language Assessments”
<https://ymcagta.org/employment-and-immigrant-services/immigrant-services/language-assessment-and-referral-services>

- 🌐 Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, “CLBPT Assessment Centres for LINC classes”
http://www.language.ca/en/index.cfm?Vair=sections&Id=17880&M=4032&Repertoire_No=2137991327

- 🌐 Centre for Education and Training, “Language Assessment: What you need to know”
https://www.tcet.com/assets/pdf/lass/LAIC_guide_English_Jan09_2015_8_5x11.pdf

(vii) HOW SHOULD REFUGEES BALANCE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION WITH EMPLOYMENT SEARCHING?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Resource guides for privately sponsored refugees emphasize the benefits to delayed entry into the job market in favor of language learning. Even if sponsored refugees have some English or French language skills, those skills may not be strong enough to work in their preferred profession. Most regulated occupations and trades require fluency in English or French and to have a strong knowledge of all work-related language. Given that refugees receive income support for their first year in Canada, they have a prime opportunity to improve their English or French through classes and conversation. Sponsors may encourage refugees to find out the language requirements they must meet to work in their profession, and spend their first year working towards establishing strong language skills before entering the job market.

On the other hand, many refugees have been out of school for many years and are keen to begin work as soon as they can. Combining part-time work, part-time language training, and sponsor tutoring may be a better option for some.

DETAIL

Strong language skills are needed to enter into Canada's labour market. Resource guides for privately sponsored refugees emphasize the benefits to delayed entry into the job market in favor of language learning. Given that refugees receive income support for their first year in Canada, they have a prime opportunity to improve their English or French through classes and conversation. Even if refugees enter the job market within their first year of arrival, language training is available on a part-time basis, during the day, evening or on weekends.

Entering the job market too soon may mean that refugees obtain employment in low-skilled jobs that do not harness their existing experience and expertise. Early entry may also delay opportunities for formal language training, skills upgrading, and accreditation for existing credentials in Canada. For more information, see 2.C.3(i).

Federally funded settlement language programming includes advanced classes focused on workplace-specific skills to help sponsored refugees find a job that matches their skills and qualifications. These classes may offer work placements, mentoring, orientation to the workplace, and licensing exam preparation. Employment-focused language training is offered for the workplace (pre-employment) and in the workplace (while employed).

Sponsors may encourage refugees to establish strong language skills before entering the job market. However, it is ultimately the sponsored refugees' decision how much to focus on language learning and employment. Entering the job market early may help refugees become financially self-sufficient sooner and increase their sense of empowerment over their own lives by being able to care for their families. Refugees have varying educational and work backgrounds which require flexible responses with respect to integration. Highly skilled and educated refugees may not be as successful in a formal school setting. Many refugees have been out of school for many years and are eager to begin work as soon as they can. Sitting in a classroom all day for months may not be an option for them. For some refugees, entering the workforce early while continuing to take part-time language classes, supplemented by sponsor tutoring, may accelerate their language acquisition and integration.

RESOURCES

- 🌐 IRCC, "Prepare to Work"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/work/index.asp>

- 🌐 IRCC, "Language classes funded by the Government of Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/language.asp>

- 📰 Ron Charles "For Syrian refugees, finding job should take back seat to learning English, say agencies" CBC News (January 29, 2016)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/syrian-refugees-jobs-1.3424351>

(viii) HOW ACCESSIBLE ARE LANGUAGE SERVICES IN TERMS OF DISTANCE FROM THE REFUGEES' RESIDENCE, CHILD CARE, ETC?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Language classes are offered across Canada and in multiple locations within the cities where refugees typically resettle. Classes are available full-time or part-time during the day, evening or on weekends, and online. In some locations, childcare is available as well as subsidies for transportation to and from classes. Some programs service providers also offer support services such as provide referrals to crisis counselling, and interpretation services, and classes for people with special needs.

When searching for permanent housing for sponsored refugees, sponsors should consider proximity or accessibility via transit to settlement services, including language training.

DETAIL

Federally funded settlement language programming is designed to be flexible and widely accessible to address the unique challenges and diversity of all adult newcomer learners. Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada (CLIC) offer language classes nationwide to sponsored refugees with various levels of English or French. Online or distance learning options, LINC Home Study and Clic en ligne, are available for learners who cannot access in-person language services but require specific language levels or benchmarks.

To increase access to language instruction classes, the Government of Canada offers child-minding spaces in classes and transportation subsidies in certain locations. Classes to accommodate people with special needs (e.g. blind or partially sighted; deaf or hard of hearing; women; seniors; youth) may also be available.

For sponsored refugees living in smaller communities where formal language training is less accessible, combining tutoring, online learning, and conversation circles has been an effective strategy. Settlement agencies, community organizations, school boards, public libraries, and post-secondary institutions may also deliver informal language instruction.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>

-  RSTP, "Education"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/education/>

-  IRCC, "Language classes funded by the Government of Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/language.asp>

C.9 WHAT COSTS NEED TO BE CONSIDERED AND WHO COVERS THEM?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

States, sponsors, refugees, and other support service providers should understand what costs they bear in a private sponsorship.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What settlement supports need to be considered in terms of cost?
- (ii) Who bears the costs of settlement support services?
- (iii) If certain costs are shared, what percentage does each party pay?
- (iv) For costs borne by sponsored refugees, are there any programs to cover these costs?

RESOURCES

-  Shauna Labman, "Private Sponsorship: Complementary or Conflicting Interests?" (Refuge, 2016)
<https://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/viewFile/40266/36411>
-  IRCC, "Joint Assistance Program – Sponsoring refugees with special needs"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/refugees/sponsor/jas.asp>
-  RSTP, "Fact Sheet: Transportation & Admissibility Loans"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Transportation-Admissibility-Loans-Fact-Sheet-6.pdf>
-  IRCC, "IMM 5373A – Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5373AE.pdf>
-  IRCC, "Do privately sponsored refugees get resettlement help from the government?"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=095&top=11>
-  IRCC, "What kind of support do government-assisted refugees get?"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=098&top=11>
-  RSTP, "Fact Sheet: Sponsorship Cost Table"
http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Fact_Sheet_7.3_Sponsorship_Cost_Table_March2014.pdf
-  Canadian Council for Refugees, "End the burden of refugee transportation loans!"
<http://ccrweb.ca/en/transportation-loans>
-  RSTP, "A Settlement Counsellor's Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/RSTP-Settlement-Workers-Guide-to-PSR-Nov-2016.pdf>

(i) WHAT SETTLEMENT SUPPORTS NEED TO BE CONSIDERED IN TERMS OF COST?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Settlement services needed to ensure successful integration include: finding housing, language training, education, assistance in finding employment, healthcare, legal assistance, recreation, and orientation.

DETAIL

Settlement services needed to ensure successful integration include:

- Assistance in finding housing (see 2.C.2);
- Language training (see 2.C.8);
- Interpretation;
- Education for children and adults (where necessary) (see 2.C.6);
- Skills training;
- Education and professional credentials assessment (see 2.C.6(iv));
- Income assistance and financial planning;
- Employment counselling (see 2.C.3);
- Physical health and dental services (see 2.C.5);
- Mental health support and trauma counselling (see 2.C.5);
- Legal assistance (see 2.C.4);
- Community orientation and navigation of transportation networks (and potentially costs of vehicle if refugees are eager to drive);
- Recreational activities; and
- Orientation (see 2.C.7).

RESOURCES

- IRCC, "Find help to adjust"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/resettle-providers.asp>

(ii) WHO BEARS THE COSTS OF SETTLEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsoring groups are generally required to cover the basic needs of sponsored refugees for their first year in Canada or until they become self-sufficient. The federal and provincial/territorial governments cover the costs of most settlement services, such as language training and employment-related services counselling, as well as education and access to healthcare. Refugees must cover their travel costs. Since April 2017, Canada has issued Interim Federal Health Program coverage to refugees to cover the costs of their medical exams. Refugees may be charged for costs of credentials assessment and some dental care, and must also pay tuition for post-secondary education (see 2.C.9(iii)). Other community organizations and municipalities may cover the costs of additional and/or supplementary services to resettled refugees.

DETAIL

SPONSORING GROUPS are responsible for providing start-up costs for household items, furniture, linens, food staples, clothing, utilities, phone installation, and first month's rent. Sponsors also pay for ongoing costs of housing, food, and transportation, and provide twelve months of income assistance to sponsored refugees.

The **GOVERNMENT OF CANADA**, through the Settlement Program, funds a network of settlement agencies across the country (outside of Quebec) that provide services such as support, orientation and information, translation and interpretation, language training, and job-related services, and referrals to other supports in the community. Canada covers the costs of language training through its Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada program (see 2.C.8).

PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS cover the costs of health care (see 2.C.5) and public primary and secondary education (see C.6). Provinces/territories also fund a variety of settlement support services and organizations.

REFUGEES must cover the costs of their travel. Since April 2017, Canada has issued Interim Federal Health Program coverage to refugees to cover the costs of their medical exams, which previously was the refugees' responsibility. They may be charged for costs of foreign educational and professional credentials assessment, and some dental care. They must also pay tuition if they choose to pursue post-secondary education (see 2.C.6 and 2.C.9(iii)).

OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, NGOs, ETHNO-CULTURAL AND DIASPORA GROUPS may provide a range of additional services to promote cultural orientation and foster better integration outcomes (see 2.C.7(i)).

RESOURCES

- 🔍 IRCC, "IFHP Overview and Immigration Medical Examination"
[http://rapconference.ca/pdf/videos/Plenary 6-IFHP and IME-Mar 9 2017.pdf](http://rapconference.ca/pdf/videos/Plenary%206-IFHP%20and%20IME-Mar%209%202017.pdf)
- 🔍 RSTP, "Fact Sheet: Transportation & Admissibility Loans"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Transportation-Admissibility-Loans-Fact-Sheet-6.pdf>
- ✅ IRCC, "IMM 5373A – Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5373AE.pdf>

 IRCC, "Settlement Program"

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/grants-contributions-funding/settlement-priorities.asp>

 Guming Zhao for the Multicultural Coalition, "The Experience of Ethnocultural Communities in Supporting Newcomers in Edmonton: A Community Research"

<http://www.emcoalition.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/The-experience-of-ethnocultural-communities-in-supporting-new-comers-in-Edmonton2009.pdf>

 Canadian Council for Refugees, "End the burden of refugee transportation loans!"

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/transportation-loans>

(iii) IF CERTAIN COSTS ARE SHARED, WHAT PERCENTAGE DOES EACH PARTY PAY?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada has various programs where it shares the costs of basic needs with sponsoring groups. Examples include the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program, the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program, and blended 3/9 and 4/8 programs. Under these programs, Canada provides some or all of income assistance for sponsored refugees while sponsoring groups provide settlement support and potentially some income assistance.

DETAIL

Canada provides several sponsorship options to share costs of settlement with private sponsors in various ways. Under the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program, government-assisted refugees with special needs receive financial support from the Government of Canada while the sponsoring group provides emotional and community support. Typically, sponsorship undertakings under the JAS program are twenty-four to thirty-six months, compared to twelve months under most other sponsorships.

Under the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program, the Government of Canada and sponsoring groups each provide up to six months of income support for basic needs, while the sponsoring groups provide the full twelve months of settlement support. Sponsoring groups must agree to sponsor refugees identified under the BVOR program, who are referred to Canada by UNHCR.

Canada has also used other cost-sharing pilot programs for private sponsorship. For example, between 1994 and 1998, Afghan Ismaili refugees were resettled through a 3/9 model in which the government provided support for the first three months of financial support for basic needs and private sponsors covered the remaining nine months. This model – as well as the similar 4/8 model – has been used to privately sponsor other refugee populations, most recently to resettle lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer refugees.

RESOURCES

- 🌐 IRCC, “Joint Assistance Program – Sponsoring refugees with special needs”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/refugees/sponsor/jas.asp>
- 🌐 IRCC, “Blended Visa Office-Referred Program – Sponsoring Refugees”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/vor.asp>
- 📖 Shauna Labman, "Private Sponsorship: Complimentary and Conflicting Interests?" (Refuge, 2016)
<http://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/40266/36411->
- 🌐 IRCC, “Providing protection to LGBTQ2 refugees”
https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2017/05/providing_protectiontolgbtq2refugees.html

(iv) FOR COSTS BORNE BY SPONSORED REFUGEES, ARE THERE ANY PROGRAMS TO COVER THESE COSTS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

While not required, sponsoring groups may offer to absorb the costs associated with sponsored refugees' travel to Canada. Otherwise, sponsored refugees may apply for loans with the Government of Canada to cover these costs. These loans must be repaid in monthly installments starting thirty days after their arrival. To alleviate this burden on refugees, some organizations may also offer grants or frequent flyer points to cover a variety of costs for refugees such as travel, housing, education, and counselling services. Sponsored refugees choosing to pursue secondary education must pay tuition fees and may be entitled to the same loans and grants as other Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

DETAIL

Sponsored refugees may apply for loans with the Government of Canada to cover the costs of transportation to Canada. These loans must be repaid in monthly installments starting thirty days after their arrival. The larger the loan amount, the more time the sponsored refugees are granted to repay the loans (see A.8(ii)). Transportation loans may impose a significant financial burden on refugees who have not yet gained employment or integrated into life in Canada. As a result, while not required, sponsoring groups may offer to absorb the costs associated with travel to Canada. In exceptional cases, the Canada has waived the costs of travel (e.g. in the resettlement of 25,000 Syrian refugees in late 2015 and early 2016).

Some organizations may also offer grants or frequent flyer points to cover a variety of costs for refugees such as travel, housing, education, and counselling services. Typically, sponsoring groups need to reach out to these organizations so their sponsored refugees benefit from their support.

As permanent residents, sponsored refugees are eligible to study anywhere in Canada. Sponsored refugees choosing to pursue post-secondary education will be responsible for covering tuition costs. However, like all permanent residents, they may be eligible for provincial educational loans and grants. Many universities, colleges, and other organizations offer scholarships and bursaries to help refugees access tertiary education (see 2.C.4(iii)).

RESOURCES

-  RSTP, "Fact Sheet: Transportation & Admissibility Loans"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Transportation-Admissibility-Loans-Fact-Sheet-6.pdf>
-  IRCC, "Financial Assistance for Protected Persons"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/student-financial-aid/protected-persons.html>
-  Foundation of Hope, "Grants"
<http://foundationofhope.net/grants/>
-  Daphne Bramham, "Challenging frequent flyers to help refugees become frugal flyers so they can arrive in Canada debt-free" (Vancouver Sun, 20 April 2016)
<http://vancouversun.com/g00/opinion/columnists/daphne-bramham-challenging-frequent-flyers-to-help-refugees-become-frugal-flyers-so-they-can-arrive-in-canada-debt-free?i10c.referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.ca%2F>

2.D REFUGEE-SPONSOR RELATIONSHIP

ACTORS MAY CONSIDER:

D.1 What happens if the sponsoring group wants to withdraw its application before the refugees arrive?

D.2 What intervention can mitigate risks of sponsorship breakdown?

D.3 What happens if a dispute between sponsors and refugees cannot be resolved?

D.4 What happens at the end of the sponsorship period?

D.5 What special considerations may apply when relatives are among the sponsors?

D.1 WHAT HAPPENS IF THE SPONSORING GROUP WANTS TO WITHDRAW ITS APPLICATION BEFORE THE REFUGEES ARRIVE?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider how to identify and to handle a situation where sponsoring groups no longer want to pursue the sponsorship after the application has been submitted but before the refugees arrive.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What is a "sponsorship withdrawal" prior to the refugees' arrival?
- (ii) What circumstances can lead to a sponsorship withdrawal prior to the refugees' arrival?
- (iii) The steps the State, sponsoring groups and refugees should consider taking to prevent a potential sponsorship withdrawal prior to the refugees' arrival
- (iv) What steps should the State, the sponsoring group, and the refugees consider taking if a sponsorship withdrawal occurs prior to the refugees' arrival?
- (v) What are the consequences for the sponsoring group in case of a sponsorship withdrawal prior to the refugees' arrival?
- (vi) What are the consequences for refugees in case of a sponsorship withdrawal prior to their arrival?
- (vii) What happens if there is a breakup in the refugee family prior to arrival?

RESOURCES

-  RSTP, "Managing Expectations"
<http://ontario.rstp.ca/en/faqs/managing-expectations/>
-  IRCC, "Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/index.asp>
-  RSTP, "Sponsorship Disputes & Breakdowns"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Sponsorship-Breakdown-Info-Sheet-RSTP-Final.pdf>
-  IRCC, "Private sponsorships"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/intake/sponsorship.asp>

(i) WHAT IS A “SPONSORSHIP WITHDRAWAL” PRIOR TO THE REFUGEES’ ARRIVAL?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

If, after submitting a sponsorship application but before the refugees’ arrival, sponsoring groups are no longer able or willing to provide financial and settlement support to the refugees, they must notify the Government of Canada. This is known as “sponsorship withdrawal.” When sponsorships involve collaboration between a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) and a Constituent Group (CG), withdrawals can only be initiated by the SAH. Groups of Five and Community Sponsors (see 2.B.3) must contact the Government of Canada to request withdrawing the sponsorship application before the refugees arrive. Sponsorship withdrawals are generally uncommon.

DETAIL

In the Canadian context, sponsorship withdrawal is “a cancellation by a sponsor of an undertaking before the issuance of a visa. It is the last option when all attempts to fulfill the conditions of the sponsorship have failed or when situations have changed.” A sponsoring group cannot withdraw a sponsorship application after the refugee’s visa to Canada has been issued. If sponsorship breakdown occurs after the visa has been issued, sponsorship dispute and breakdown protocols are triggered (see 2.D.2). Sponsorship withdrawal is an uncommon experience in Canada.

If sponsoring groups are no longer able or willing to provide financial and settlement support before the refugees’ arrival, then they must notify the Government of Canada of their request to withdraw.

When sponsorships involve collaboration between a SAH and a CG, withdrawals can only be initiated by the SAH. If a CG attempts a withdrawal, the Government of Canada must notify the SAH, so that the SAH can make alternative arrangements for the sponsorship (i.e. assign the refugees to a different CG, recruit new sponsors, etc.). SAHs are ultimately responsible for their CG’s sponsorship undertaking (see 2.B.5) since the sponsorship agreement is between the Government of Canada and the SAH.

RESOURCES

- IRCC, “Private sponsorships”

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/intake/sponsorship.asp>

(ii) WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES CAN LEAD TO A SPONSORSHIP WITHDRAWAL PRIOR TO THE REFUGEES' ARRIVAL?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The Government of Canada determines on a case-by-case basis if sponsorship withdrawal (see 2.D.1(i)) is permitted based on the circumstances. Sponsorship withdrawal may be acceptable if the sponsoring group no longer has the capacity to provide financial assistance and settlement support for reasons beyond its control. Sponsorship withdrawal will not be permitted if the group prefers to sponsor other refugees or over-extends its support for multiple undertakings.

DETAIL

The Government of Canada determines whether sponsorship withdrawal is permitted on a case-by-case basis.

ACCEPTABLE REASONS for sponsorship withdrawal may include:

- There are unexpected changes in the financial status of the sponsoring group that render it unable to support the refugee(s) financially;
- There is a major change of condition, such as significant loss of membership, so great that it prevents the sponsoring group from being able to fulfill its sponsorship obligations;
- New information arises about the refugee family that may put undue strain on the sponsor's resources and create excessive demands that a sponsor cannot meet (e.g. additional people in the refugees' family unit);
- The sponsoring group learns information about the refugees that would make them ineligible or inadmissible to resettle in Canada; and
- The refugees no longer wish to resettle in Canada.

UNACCEPTABLE REASONS to withdraw the sponsorship may include:

- The sponsoring group would rather sponsor other refugees and does not have the capacity for multiple undertakings;
- There is a change of leadership in the sponsoring group;
- A sponsoring group has over-extended its ability to support all submitted sponsorship undertakings, including both financial and in-kind assistance
- A sponsoring group cannot withdraw a sponsorship application after the refugees' visa to Canada has been issued. If sponsorship breakdown occurs after the visa has been issued, sponsorship dispute and breakdown protocols are triggered (see 2.D.2).

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Private sponsorships"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/intake/sponsorship.asp>

(iii) THE STEPS THE STATE, SPONSORING GROUPS AND REFUGEES SHOULD CONSIDER TAKING TO PREVENT A POTENTIAL SPONSORSHIP WITHDRAWAL PRIOR TO THE REFUGEES' ARRIVAL

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsorship withdrawal (see 2.D.1(i)) should only be used as a measure of last resort. Sponsoring groups should only withdraw when all other attempts to fulfil the conditions of the sponsorship have failed or when situations have changed to the point where the sponsorship is no longer viable. For example, the group should raise additional funds or recruit more members to meet certain changes in conditions. Otherwise, the applications should be transferred to another eligible sponsoring group to ensure the refugees may still resettle in Canada.

DETAIL

Sponsorship withdrawal should only be used as a measure of last resort when all attempts to fulfill the conditions of the sponsorship have failed or when the sponsorship is no longer viable due to unavoidable changes in sponsors' circumstances. For example, if there are additional family members to sponsor who were not initially disclosed (e.g. with the birth of a new family member), the sponsoring group may attempt to raise more funds to provide additional financial support to the refugees upon arrival. If a key member has left the sponsoring group, then efforts should be made to replace that member.

If the sponsoring group can no longer sponsor the refugees, a replacement group should be found. For example, if the current sponsoring group can no longer sponsor a refugee because the group recently learned that he or she has a medical condition that requires additional care, then a migration officer should try to transfer the sponsorship to a sponsoring group in a city where medical care for the refugee's condition is available.

In the case of a Constituent Group (CG) /Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) sponsorship (see 2.B.3), the CG should work with the SAH to address the reasons for wishing to withdraw the application or to find a replacement CG. Groups of Five or Community Sponsors may work with the local migration office to attempt to find a replacement group.

(iv) WHAT STEPS SHOULD THE STATE, THE SPONSORING GROUP, AND THE REFUGEES CONSIDER TAKING IF A SPONSORSHIP WITHDRAWAL OCCURS PRIOR TO THE REFUGEES' ARRIVAL?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

If the sponsoring group's issues cannot be resolved prior to the refugees' arrival, it needs to submit a sponsorship withdrawal request (see 2.D.1(i)) to the Government of Canada. The sponsoring group and/or the refugees should try to identify a replacement group if the sponsorship is still viable. If a replacement group is not found, Canada processes the sponsorship withdrawal and the overseas visa office sends a refusal letter to the refugees. If a replacement group is identified, Canada reviews the new sponsoring group's eligibility (see 2.B.3) and resumes processing the sponsorship application.

DETAIL

If sponsors cannot resolve their issues prior to the refugees' arrival and the sponsoring group breaks down, the sponsoring group must send a sponsorship withdrawal request to the Government of Canada. The sponsoring group must explain or document the circumstances leading to the withdrawal request. The Government of Canada processes the withdrawal request, requests more information about the reasons for withdrawing if necessary, and inquires whether the sponsors have found a replacement group to whom they may transfer the sponsorship, if the sponsorship is still viable.

The overseas visa office is notified of the sponsorship withdrawal request and suspends processing of the refugees' permanent residence application. If necessary, the visa office sends a letter to the refugees notifying them that they have ninety days to find a replacement sponsoring group. If the initial sponsors and/or refugees are unable to identify a replacement group, the visa office sends a refusal letter to the refugees. If the sponsors and/or refugees are able to find a replacement group, they must notify the Government of Canada, which will assess the replacement group's eligibility (see 2.B.3, 2.D.1(iii)). If Canada determines the new sponsors are eligible to sponsor the refugees, overseas processing of the refugees' application resumes (see 2.A.2(i)).

(v) WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE SPONSORING GROUP IN CASE OF A SPONSORSHIP WITHDRAWAL PRIOR TO THE REFUGEES' ARRIVAL?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The consequences for sponsoring groups of withdrawing from a sponsorship (see 2.D.1(i)) depend on the reasons for the sponsorship withdrawal. If the sponsoring group withdraws for acceptable reasons (see 2.D.1(ii)), Canada does not penalize them in their current and future undertakings. If the sponsoring groups withdraws for unacceptable reasons (see 2.D.1(ii)), then they may be ineligible to submit future sponsorship applications. If a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) withdraws an application for unacceptable reasons, Canada may review the SAH's agreement and consider amending, suspending, or cancelling it.

DETAIL

See 2.D.1(ii) for a non-exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable reasons to withdraw a sponsorship application.

If the reason for the withdrawal is related to a change in group composition, Canada must determine whether the same sponsoring group or its members have other sponsorships in progress and whether those sponsorships are still viable if a new sponsorship is undertaken.

If a Constituent Group requests to withdraw its application, the SAH may decide to appoint a replacement Constituent Group or to assume total responsibility for the sponsorship.

(vi) WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR REFUGEES IN CASE OF A SPONSORSHIP WITHDRAWAL PRIOR TO THEIR ARRIVAL?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

If sponsors withdraw their application and the sponsors and/or refugees are unable to find a replacement group to undertake the sponsorship (see 2.D.1(iii)-(iv)), the refugees' application for resettlement to Canada through private sponsorship will be refused.

DETAIL

When the Government of Canada receives a sponsoring group's withdrawal request, it will request that the initial sponsoring group identify a replacement group to undertake the sponsorship by a certain deadline. If a replacement group is not found by that deadline, the Government of Canada will send a "procedural fairness" letter to the refugees overseas instructing them to secure a new sponsoring group within ninety days.

If the refugees are unable to identify a replacement sponsoring group in time, the overseas visa office will send them a refusal letter, explaining that the sponsorship application has been refused under Reg. 139(1)(f) of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*.

Reg. 139(1)(f) provides that Canada will issue permanent resident visas to refugees whose private sponsorship applications have been approved.

RESOURCES

 Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/sor-2002-227/>

(vii) WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE IS A BREAKUP IN THE REFUGEE FAMILY PRIOR TO ARRIVAL?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

If a married or common law couple being sponsored divorces or separates, their application will be severed. This may require completing new and separate forms for each partner. If the couple has children and only one parent immigrates to Canada with the children, the non-accompanying parent must either provide consent for the children to immigrate to Canada or the immigrating parent must obtain a court order granting him or her full custody with no visitation rights to the other parent. The sponsoring group may choose to continue sponsoring both partners separately.

DETAIL

A divorce or separation in the refugee family affects the sponsorship application in several ways. Since divorced or separated partners do not qualify as “dependants” under Canada’s immigration laws, they can no longer be part of the same sponsorship application. Therefore, in case of divorce or separation, their application will be severed. This may require completing new and separate forms for each partner. Each partner will need to independently qualify for refugee status and resettlement (i.e. meet the eligibility and admissibility criteria – see 2.A.1 and 2.A.6).

If the partners have children, they will need to determine custody arrangements by agreement or through a court that has jurisdiction to determine custody. If only one of the parents immigrates to Canada and brings the children, the non-accompanying parent must either provide consent for the children to immigrate to Canada or the immigrating parent must obtain a court order granting him or her full custody with no visitation rights to the other parent.

In case of divorce or separation, the sponsoring group may choose to continue sponsoring both partners. However, the group will need to demonstrate that they are able to provide additional income assistance and settlement support for two separate households. Importantly, the sponsoring group members must ensure they remain impartial and respect each partner’s confidentiality and autonomy. Sponsoring groups may choose to continue sponsoring one partner and withdraw from sponsoring the other.

RESOURCES

 IRCC, “OP1 – Procedures”

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op01-eng.pdf>

 IRCC, “Declaration from Non-Accompanying Parent/Guardian for Minors Immigrating to Canada”

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5604E.pdf>

D.2 WHAT INTERVENTION CAN MITIGATE RISKS OF SPONSORSHIP BREAKDOWN?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider how to mitigate the risk of sponsorship breakdown and create mechanisms to address breakdowns.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What steps should the state, sponsoring group, refugees, and potentially other actors consider taking to reduce the likelihood of a sponsorship dispute and breakdown?

- (ii) What steps should the State take to mediate and resolve disputes between sponsoring groups and refugees?

RESOURCES

- 🔗 RSTP, "Monitoring"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/monitoring/>

- 🔗 RSTP, "Sponsorship Disputes & Breakdowns"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Sponsorship-Breakdown-Info-Sheet-RSTP-Final.pdf>

- 🎥 RSTP, "Refugee Sponsorship and Expectations: Sponsor and Refugee Perspectives"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvWbp_d5ivU

- 🔗 SAH Association, "Managing Expectations – Sponsors and Newcomers"
http://www.sahassociation.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/B1_PSR_Managing-Expectations-2016-Apr19.pdf

- 🔗 SAH Association, "Sponsorship Expectations Letter – SAMPLE"
http://www.sahassociation.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/B2_PSR_Sponsorship-Expectations-Letter_Sample-2016-Apr19.pdf

- 🔗 Canadian Council for Refugees, "Secondary migration and sponsorship breakdown"
<http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/other-useful-info-secondary-migration-and-breakdown>

(i) WHAT STEPS SHOULD THE STATE, SPONSORING GROUP, REFUGEES, AND POTENTIALLY OTHER ACTORS CONSIDER TAKING TO REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF A SPONSORSHIP DISPUTE AND BREAKDOWN?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsorship breakdown is rare in Canada. Key practices Canada employs to maintain low levels of sponsorship breakdown include: requiring sponsors to submit detailed Settlement Plans as part of the sponsorship application; Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) review of and supervision over the implementation of their Constituent Groups' (CGs) Settlement Plans; sponsor training and advice on their responsibilities; overseas training for refugees to help manage expectations; and dispute resolution mechanisms.

DETAIL

In the Canadian context, sponsorship breakdown is rare. The following are key practices Canada employs that help to maintain low levels of sponsorship breakdown.

Assessing the sponsors' eligibility and capacity to sponsor at the initial processing stage helps reduce the likelihood of sponsorship dispute and breakdown. Sponsors must submit detailed financial information and Settlement Plans as part of their application to sponsor refugees (see 2.B.3 and 2.B.4).

Similarly, SAHs may revisit the Settlement Plan with CGs and co-sponsors shortly before the refugees arrive in Canada, and/or shortly after the refugees arrive, together with the refugees. This is especially important if the sponsorship application processing time has taken several months or years, as the CG's composition may have changed from the time the application was initially submitted. Post-arrival, SAHs may also visit the sponsored refugees' homes to observe whether their living conditions are suitable and appropriate.

Sponsors should ensure they are adequately informed about their roles and responsibilities towards the sponsored refugees. Sponsors may inform themselves through training sessions offered by the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program, learning from other sponsors' experiences, advanced planning and communication with any co-sponsors, communicating with the refugees prior to arrival (see 2.A.5), and ensuring adequate funds are available to support the refugees that reflect the actual costs of living in the community of resettlement. Sponsors should be aware of and minimize as much as possible the power imbalance inherent in the sponsor-refugee relationship. Sponsors should communicate their responsibilities clearly to refugees and manage expectations regarding the scope of their support.

Refugees should make efforts to learn as much as possible about life in Canada before arriving, for instance, by attending the International Organization for Migration's Canadian Orientation Abroad pre-departure orientation and communicating regularly with their sponsors (see 2.A.3 and 2.A.5). This will help them manage their expectations and to understand the roles the sponsors will play in their resettlement.

Post-arrival, sponsors and refugees may also reach out to a number of organizations to help them resolve disputes. If the sponsoring group is a CG of a SAH, the CG may contact the SAH for assistance in mediating a dispute. SAHs may also reach out to the national SAH Association for further support. All sponsors may contact the Canadian Council for Refugees, local settlement agencies, as well as the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program, as they employ experts on refugee resettlement and private sponsorship who can provide information, resources, and services, as well as help to mediate and resolve disputes among sponsors or between sponsors and refugees. If these organizations sense a possible unresolvable dispute, they should contact the local migration office to trigger sponsorship dispute and breakdown procedures.

RESOURCES

-  RSTP, "Managing Expectations" - Video
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/managing-expectations/>

-  RSTP, "Supporting Settlement and Integration"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/supporting-settlement-and-integration-2/>

-  RSTP, "Monitoring"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/monitoring/>

-  IRCC, "Find free newcomer services near you"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/services/index.asp>

-  IRCC, "Privately Sponsored Refugee Resettlement in Canada"
http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/PSR_eng.pdf

-  RSTP, "Power Imbalance"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/5476/>

-  RSTP, "Sponsorship Ethics"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/ethics/>

(ii) WHAT STEPS SHOULD THE STATE TAKE TO MEDIATE AND RESOLVE DISPUTES BETWEEN SPONSORING GROUPS AND REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

If the Government of Canada is informed by the sponsor, refugee, or a third party of a dispute between sponsors and refugees, a migration officer must contact both parties to the dispute and determine whether there is an issue that requires intervention. The migration officer first conducts a preliminary inquiry to verify whether the refugees are able to access the support they need. If there is a dispute requiring intervention, the sponsor and the refugee are provided with an opportunity to reach a mutually agreed-upon solution to prevent breakdown. If unsuccessful, the migration officer will conduct a mediation session between the sponsors and refugees. If, at this point, the parties do not succeed in arriving at a solution, the migration officer must determine which parties bear what responsibility for the breakdown, and make recommendations for the consequences of the breakdown.

DETAIL

Though breakdowns are rare, local migration offices may find out about a sponsorship dispute from the sponsors, refugees, or local services organizations. Migration officers should not intervene in day-to-day exchanges between sponsors and refugees since working through minor disagreements can strengthen relationships. The Government of Canada may intervene in cases where: (i) One or both of the parties to the dispute have requested an intervention; (ii) When contact with the disputing parties has confirmed that internal resolution is not possible; and (iii) When the refugee has approached a social service agency, which in turn has reported the situation to the Government of Canada.

If the Government of Canada learns of a dispute from a third party, the migration officer should contact the sponsors and refugees directly to determine whether the situation is in fact true. In cases involving Constituent Groups, the Government of Canada should notify the Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH). SAHS are first given the opportunity to resolve the dispute internally. If internal dispute resolution is unsuccessful, the Government of Canada will conduct a preliminary inquiry into a breakdown situation to assess whether the sponsors are still fulfilling their settlement and financial obligations towards the refugees and to ensure that the refugees are able to access the services they need. If necessary, an migration officer will facilitate a mediation session, which contains fact-finding components, encourages dialogue and brainstorming, and leads to mutually agreed-upon solutions.

If no solution is found, the officer must determine who is responsible for the breakdown. If sponsors are found to be at fault, they can be declared in sponsorship default (see D.3(ii)). When the assessment has been completed, the officer will draft a Sponsorship Breakdown/Procedural Fairness Letter, which addresses how one or both parties are responsible for the breakdown and includes recommendations for the consequences of the breakdown.

Throughout the mediation process, a written record of all communications involving the local migration office should be maintained. A separate document with major decisions, facts, action items, etc. should be prepared and copied to all parties involved.

Not all communities are staffed with migration officers. Where these do not exist, sponsors and refugees can contact the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program, the Canadian Council for Refugees, or other agencies and organizations serving refugees in their community for assistance. In cases of unresolvable disputes, the Government of Canada must process the sponsorship under breakdown protocols.

D.3 WHAT HAPPENS IF A DISPUTE BETWEEN SPONSORS AND REFUGEES CANNOT BE RESOLVED?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider how to handle a sponsorship breakdown arising after the sponsored refugees' arrival.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What is a "sponsorship breakdown" and under what circumstances does it occur?
- (ii) What are the consequences for the sponsoring group in case of a sponsorship breakdown after the refugees' arrival?
- (iii) What are the consequences for the refugees in case of a sponsorship breakdown after their arrival?
- (iv) What happens if there is a breakup in the refugee family after they arrive?

RESOURCES

-  RSTP, "Sponsorship Disputes & Breakdowns"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Sponsorship-Breakdown-Info-Sheet-RSTP-Final.pdf>
-  Canadian Council for Refugees, "Secondary migration and sponsorship breakdown"
<http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/other-useful-info-secondary-migration-and-breakdown>
-  Charmaine Spencer, "Immigration, Abuse and Capacity Issues: Background Paper"
http://www.bcli.org/sites/default/files/Immigration_abuse_and_capacity_issues_background_paper.pdf

(i) WHAT IS A “SPONSORSHIP BREAKDOWN” AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES DOES IT OCCUR?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

After privately sponsored refugees arrive in Canada, a sponsorship breakdown occurs when the sponsoring group no longer meets its responsibilities to provide care, lodging, settlement assistance, and financial support to the sponsored refugees. Sponsorship breakdowns may be caused by both sponsors and refugees, depending on the circumstances. If the sponsoring group is responsible for the breakdown, the Government of Canada may find it in sponsorship default.

DETAIL

Sponsorship dispute and breakdown protocols are triggered at any point after a refugee has been issued a visa to be resettled to Canada, but most often occur, if at all, after a refugee has arrived in Canada.

A NO-FAULT SPONSORSHIP BREAKDOWN is declared when the sponsoring group breaches its legal responsibilities for reasons beyond its control. Examples include:

- Unknown information on the refugees materializes, e.g. a physical or mental health condition, resulting in an excessive demand on settlement assistance provided by the sponsoring group;
- A refugee's circumstances change, e.g. a marital separation, resulting in an excessive demand on the sponsoring group's financial assistance;
- The refugees freely relocate to another part of the country.

A SPONSORSHIP DEFAULT occurs when the sponsoring group is responsible for the breakdown. Examples include:

- The sponsoring group has run out of funds to cover the refugees' financial needs;
- The sponsoring group loses members, no longer has the capacity to provide care and settlement assistance, and cannot find a new sponsor group;
- Due to disagreements or conflicts, the sponsoring group chooses to no longer provide settlement assistance or financial support to the sponsored refugees;
- The sponsored refugees have to relocate because they have been exploited or abused by the sponsoring group, and have no means to sustain their basic needs.

RESOURCES

-  RSTP, “Sponsorship Disputes & Breakdowns”
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Sponsorship-Breakdown-Info-Sheet-RSTP-Final.pdf>

(ii) WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE SPONSORING GROUP IN CASE OF A SPONSORSHIP BREAKDOWN AFTER THE REFUGEES' ARRIVAL?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The consequences for the sponsoring group will depend on whether the sponsoring group is at fault for the sponsorship breakdown. If the sponsoring group is found to be responsible for the breakdown, then they are placed in sponsorship default and are unable to submit another sponsorship application until the default period ends. If the sponsoring group is found not to be responsible for the breakdown, then the sponsorship is cancelled and no consequences follow for the sponsors. Generally, unless it is very clear that one side has caused the conflict, it is unlikely that fault will be assigned, and it will then be declared to be a "no-fault breakdown."

DETAIL

A "sponsorship breakdown" is an official declaration that an irreparable failure to meet the sponsorship arrangement (care, lodging and settlement) has occurred for refugee applicants listed on the sponsorship undertaking after the principal applicant has arrived in Canada. Responsibility for a sponsorship breakdown may rest with the refugee(s), with the sponsor or with the Government of Canada, or it may be attributable to more than one party or not to any party (see 2.D.3(i) for examples). In these cases, no negative consequences for the sponsoring group follow.

Since there are three parties involved in any sponsorship (the sponsoring group, the Government of Canada, and the refugee), each of whom bears responsibility for the success of a sponsorship, a breakdown inevitably entails consequences for all parties, as outlined below.

In cases of unresolvable disputes between sponsors and refugees, the Government of Canada will declare a breakdown and issue a Sponsorship Breakdown/Procedural Fairness Letter, outlining whether the sponsoring group is primarily responsible for the breakdown and recommending consequences that may be categorized into the following four areas:

1. Declaration of a no-fault breakdown;
2. Review of sponsoring group's other sponsorship undertakings;
3. Suspension, cancellation, or amendment of the sponsorship agreement for Sponsorship Agreement Holders;
and
4. Declaration of default (see 2.D.3(i)).

In cases of default, the Government of Canada will attempt to find a replacement sponsoring group to provide support for the rest of the sponsorship period. If unable to find a new sponsoring group, refugees will be referred to appropriate federal or provincial supports (see 2.D.3(iv)).

Sponsors in default will be unable to submit future sponsorship applications until their default has ended. To end a financial default, the sponsoring group must repay the appropriate government body the financial assistance it provided to the refugees in place of the sponsors. In the case of a non-financial default, it is at the discretion of the Government of Canada to end the default if the refugees subsequently find a way to meet their settlement needs (e.g. find housing).

RESOURCES

- RSTP, "The Rights of Privately Sponsored Refugees"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/RSTP-Rights-of-PSRs-National-Updated-Nov.-4-2016.pdf>

- RSTP, "Sponsorship Disputes & Breakdowns"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Sponsorship-Breakdown-Info-Sheet-RSTP-Final.pdf>

(iii) WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REFUGEES IN CASE OF A SPONSORSHIP BREAKDOWN AFTER THEIR ARRIVAL?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

When there is an unresolvable dispute between sponsors and refugees, and the Government of Canada declares a breakdown, the primary responsibility for locating a new sponsoring group lies with the original sponsor, whenever possible. Sponsorship breakdown does not affect the refugees' legal status as permanent residents in Canada, regardless of whether they are responsible for the breakdown.

If a new sponsoring group cannot be located, the Government of Canada will connect refugees with the appropriate municipal, provincial or federal authorities.

DETAIL

SUPPORT DURING A SPONSORSHIP DISPUTE: During the period of dispute between sponsors and refugees and investigation into a potential breakdown, Government of Canada officers may arrange for emergency settlement assistance and financial support if the refugees are not receiving adequate support from the sponsor. Officers consider needs such as rental payment, utility costs, groceries, household products, medication, children's needs, public transportation and any medical or psychological needs. It is essential that arrangements be made to address the ongoing needs of the refugee while the Government of Canada investigates reasons for insufficient levels of support.

SUPPORT AFTER A BREAKDOWN IS DECLARED: Once a breakdown is declared, the primary responsibility for locating a new sponsoring group lies with the original sponsor, wherever possible. For example, if the breakdown is the result of the refugees relocating, to another part of the country, the sponsor is responsible for trying to find a new sponsoring group in their new community of resettlement.

If the Government of Canada declares a sponsorship breakdown, the sponsors are no longer expected to provide financial and settlement support to the refugees. If no alternative sponsoring group is found, sponsored refugees will first be referred to municipal or provincial social assistance programs. If they are refused social assistance, they are then referred to the federally funded Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). Refugees referred to the RAP will receive federal income support until the end of their sponsorship period or until they become self-sufficient. If they are not self-sufficient by the end of the sponsorship period, they will then become eligible for municipal and provincial social assistance.

Sponsorship breakdown does not affect the refugees' legal status as permanent residents in Canada, regardless of whether they are responsible for the breakdown (see 2.C.1).

(iv) WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE IS A BREAKUP IN THE REFUGEE FAMILY AFTER THEY ARRIVE?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

A breakup in the refugee family may lead to a sponsorship breakdown when sponsors no longer have the capacity to provide financial and settlement support to two separate households. The Government of Canada will expect the sponsors to continue supporting the household with the highest number of people. The other household will be processed for breakdown (see 2.D.3(i)-(iii)). The ability of sponsors to provide support may also be affected if a separated or divorced sponsored spouse moves from the initial community of resettlement to another part of the country.

DETAIL

Marital separations often lead to increased financial and settlement support burdens for sponsors, since separated spouses live in separate households requiring additional payments of rent, furnishing, utilities costs, costs of food, etc. For some sponsoring groups, this increase in costs exceeds what they have undertaken and are able to provide to the family.

Sponsoring groups may consider recruiting additional members into their group or to raise more funds to be able to continue supporting the entire refugee family. Constituent Groups should contact their Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) to ask whether additional assistance may be available. However, when this is not possible, the sponsors may report the issue to the Government of Canada.

Canada expects the sponsors to continue supporting at least the household with the highest number of people. The smaller household will be processed for breakdown (see 2.D.3(i)-(iii)):

- Canada expects sponsors to look for a replacement sponsoring group for the smaller household. It is expected that the refugees reasonably comply with efforts to find replacement sponsors.
- If initially sponsored by a Constituent Group/SAH, the refugees will be asked to apply for provincially funded income support programs. If this application is denied, the refugees are referred to the federally-funded Resettlement Assistance Program until the end of the sponsorship period or until they become self-sufficient. If they are not self-sufficient by the end of the sponsorship period, these refugees will become eligible for municipal and provincial income support.
- If initially sponsored by a Group of Five or Community Sponsor, the refugees are referred directly to municipal and provincial social assistance programs.

D.4 WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE SPONSORSHIP PERIOD?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider the various options available to refugees who may not be self-supporting by the end of the sponsorship undertaking.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) What is the appropriate length of a sponsorship undertaking? Under what circumstances can the length of the sponsorship vary?
- (ii) What opportunities are available to sponsors following the end of the sponsorship period?
- (iii) What sources of community and social assistance may refugees turn to following the sponsorship period, if necessary?
- (iv) Can sponsoring groups renew their sponsorship undertakings?
- (v) Are subsequent sponsorship applications affected by past sponsorships?

RESOURCES

-  RSTP, "Month 13 Planning – Resource Kit"
<http://triec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Month-13-Resource-Kit-v.1.4.pdf>
-  RSTP, "Planning for Month 13: BC Employment and Assistance Program"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/supporting-settlement-and-integration/>
-  RSTP, "Planning for Month 13: New Brunswick Social Assistance"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/4961/>
-  RSTP, "Planning for Month 13: Nova Scotia Income Assistance"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/4977/>
-  United Way Ottawa, "What is Month 13?"
<https://www.unitedwayottawa.ca/what-is-month-13/>
-  Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, "Finding Refuge in Canada: A Syrian Resettlement Story"
https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/committee/421/RIDR/Reports/RIDR_RPT_SyrianResettlement_FINAL_E.pdf

(i) WHAT IS THE APPROPRIATE LENGTH OF A SPONSORSHIP UNDERTAKING? UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES CAN THE LENGTH OF THE SPONSORSHIP VARY?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsoring groups agree to provide refugees with care, lodging, settlement assistance and support for the duration of the sponsorship period. Normally, this lasts twelve months starting from the refugees' arrival in Canada or until the refugee becomes self-sufficient, whichever comes first. As of 1 January 2018, the benchmark level of financial support under private sponsorship must be, at a minimum, equivalent to the prevailing Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) rates in the expected community of settlement. Thus, a refugee is deemed to be financially self-sufficient if their level of income is greater than or equivalent to RAP rates.

In exceptional circumstances, prior to the refugees' arrival, Canada may determine that certain refugees require more time to become established in Canada and require a longer period of support from sponsors. In those cases, the visa officer will ask the sponsoring group to extend the sponsorship period to a maximum of thirty-six months. The sponsoring group has the option of refusing the request for an extension of the sponsorship period but risks having the case refused as a result.

DETAIL

Sponsoring groups typically agree to provide the refugees with financial and settlement support for their first twelve months in Canada or until they become self-sufficient (whichever occurs first).

Sponsoring groups' undertaking may be twenty-four to thirty-six months for refugees sponsored through the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) Program. These are refugees with special needs who require additional settlement support. Special needs may be required due to trauma from violence or torture, medical disabilities, systemic discrimination, or a large number of family members. In JAS cases, the Government of Canada provides income support for up to twenty-four months, while the private sponsors provide settlement and emotional support to help the refugees adjust to life in Canada.

In the case of Blended Visa-Office Referred refugees, the sponsorship undertaking is twelve months, but Canada provides six months of financial support.

Even after the formal sponsorship undertaking finishes, some sponsoring groups have decided to continue providing financial and settlement support to the refugees they have sponsored. Sponsoring groups are not required to inform the Government of Canada of their continued support past the formal sponsorship period.

In determining an appropriate length of sponsorship undertaking, stakeholders should consider the refugees' capacity to become self-sufficient, the refugees' special needs, and the sponsoring group's capacity and motivation. Reports and articles have raised the challenges surrounding the transition from sponsor income support to self-sufficiency or provincial assistance in "Month 13" in Canada.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Joint Assistance Program – Sponsoring refugees with special needs"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/refugees/sponsor/jas.asp>

🌐 IRCC, “Blended Visa Office-Referred Program – Sponsoring Refugees”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/vor.asp>

📰 Jodi Kantor and Catrin Einhorn, “Canadians Adopted Refugee Families for a Year. Then Came ‘Month 13’”
(New York Times, 25 March 2017)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/25/world/canada/syrian-refugees.html>

📰 Macleans, “A milestone looms for Canada’s Syrian refugees: ‘Month 13’” (Macleans, 15 December 2016)
<http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/a-milestone-looms-for-canadas-syrian-refugees-month-13/>

(ii) WHAT OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE TO SPONSORS FOLLOWING THE END OF THE SPONSORSHIP PERIOD?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

At the end of the sponsorship undertaking, sponsoring groups may choose to continue providing financial and settlement support to the refugees, although they are not required to do so. Sponsoring groups may also apply to sponsor more overseas refugees. They will again be assessed to determine if they meet sponsorship eligibility requirements.

Experienced sponsoring groups may also decide to mentor other groups. Workshops are a useful forum where they can share their experiences and provide guidance on the sponsorship and resettlement process. Workshops engage potential sponsoring groups and lead to more successful future sponsorships.

DETAIL

At the end of the sponsorship undertaking, sponsoring groups may choose to continue providing financial and settlement support to the refugees, although they are not required to do so. In deciding to extend their support, sponsoring groups should consider their capacity to do so, the refugees' chances of eventual self-sufficiency, the impact on the refugees' eligibility to receive social or income assistance from the government, and the refugees' rights to self-determination.

Sponsoring groups may also apply to sponsor more overseas refugees. They will again be assessed to determine if they meet sponsorship eligibility requirements. Successful past sponsorships are not considered in determining sponsorship eligibility, although sponsorship defaults may preclude them from submitting new applications (see 2.D.3(ii)).

Experienced sponsoring groups may also decide to mentor other groups. Workshops are a useful forum where they can share their experiences and provide guidance on the sponsorship and resettlement process. Workshops engage potential sponsoring groups and lead to more successful future sponsorships. Sponsorship organizations, such as Refugee 613 and the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program, coordinate with experienced sponsoring groups to organize workshops for the general public.

RESOURCES

-  Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Mentorship"
<http://www.capitalrainbow.ca/mentorship>

-  RSTP, "Workshops"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/training/workshops/>

-  Refugee 613, "Sponsorship Training and Legal Advice"
<https://www.refugee613.ca/pages/sponsorship-training-and-legal-advice>

-  RSTP, "Month 13 Planning – Resource Kit"
<http://triec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Month-13-Resource-Kit-v.1.4.pdf>

(iii) WHAT SOURCES OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MAY REFUGEES TURN TO FOLLOWING THE SPONSORSHIP PERIOD, IF NECESSARY?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

At the end of the sponsorship undertaking, sponsoring groups may choose to continue providing financial or settlement support to the refugees. Refugees may also turn to various community and social assistance service providers, depending on their needs.

If they are unable to fully support themselves financially, refugees may apply for provincial social or income assistance. Sponsoring groups are advised to research and explain the types of supports available and the process to access them before the sponsorship period ends.

Refugees may also turn to community agencies like settlement organizations for employment training services and language classes, community healthcare centers for medical services, and schools for further education. Sponsoring groups should inform the refugees that these services are available once the sponsorship undertaking ends.

DETAIL

At the end of the sponsorship undertaking, refugees may continue receiving financial or settlement support from their sponsoring groups if the latter chooses to provide it. If the sponsoring group ends its financial and/or settlement support to the refugees at the end of the sponsorship period, and the refugees are not yet self-sufficient, they may turn to various community and social assistance service providers. Some benchmarks of self-sufficiency include, but are not restricted to: employment/self-employment with sufficient income to cover living costs; and the ability to conduct day-to-day tasks (e.g. paying rent bills, budgeting, and knowledge of local area and transportation).

Refugees are entitled to social assistance, welfare support, and subsidized housing post-sponsorship. If they are unable to fully support themselves financially, they may apply for provincial social or income assistance. Sponsoring groups are advised to research and explain the refugees' eligibility for social assistance, welfare support, and subsidized housing before the end of the sponsorship period.

Refugees may also turn to community agencies like settlement organizations for employment training services and language classes, community healthcare centers for medical services, and schools for further education. Sponsoring groups should inform the refugees that these services are available once the sponsorship undertaking ends.

RESOURCES

-  RSTP, "Month 13 Planning – Resource Kit"
<http://triec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Month-13-Resource-Kit-v.1.4.pdf>

-  United Way Ottawa, "What is Month 13?"
<https://www.unitedwayottawa.ca/what-is-month-13/>

-  Jodi Kantor and Catrin Einhorn, "Canadians Adopted Refugee Families for a Year. Then Came 'Month 13'" (New York Times, 25 March 2017)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/25/world/canada/syrian-refugees.html>

(iv) CAN SPONSORING GROUPS RENEW THEIR SPONSORSHIP UNDERTAKINGS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsorship undertakings generally last twelve months. After twelve months, the sponsoring group may choose to continue providing financial and/or settlement support to the refugees, but are not required to do so. There is no formal sponsorship renewal process.

If sponsoring groups would like to sponsor more overseas refugees, they need to submit an application to the Government of Canada, which will review the groups' sponsorship eligibility. Due to their Sponsorship Agreements with Canada, Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) can make new sponsorship undertakings without Canada having to assess their eligibility to sponsor.

DETAIL

Sponsorship undertakings generally last twelve months. In some situations, this time may be extended before the refugees' arrival to a maximum of thirty-six months if Canada feels it is appropriate (see 2.D.4(i)). If the sponsoring group is not willing to undertake a longer sponsorship period, the application may be withdrawn or refused.

After twelve months, sponsoring groups may choose to continue providing financial and/or settlement support to the refugees, but are not required to do so (see 2.D.4(ii)). There is no formal sponsorship renewal process.

If sponsoring groups would like to sponsor more overseas refugees, they need to submit an application to the Government of Canada, which will review the groups' sponsorship eligibility (see 2.B.3). Due to their Sponsorship Agreements with Canada, SAHs can make new sponsorship undertakings without Canada having to assess their financial ability to sponsor. However, Canada will still review a SAH's Settlement Plan before approving a sponsorship application.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Joint Assistance Program – Sponsoring refugees with special needs"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/refugees/sponsor/jas.asp>

-  Jodi Kantor and Catrin Einhorn, "Canadians Adopted Refugee Families for a Year. Then Came 'Month 13'" (New York Times, 25 March 2017)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/25/world/canada/syrian-refugees.html>

-  Macleans, "A milestone looms for Canada's Syrian refugees: 'Month 13'" (Macleans, 15 December 2016)
<http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/a-milestone-looms-for-canadas-syrian-refugees-month-13/>

(v) ARE SUBSEQUENT SPONSORSHIP APPLICATIONS AFFECTED BY PAST SPONSORSHIPS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The Government of Canada reviews each sponsorship application to determine the sponsors' financial and settlement capacity to resettle refugees (see 2.B.3). Sponsoring groups who fulfill the financial and settlement requirements to sponsor will be approved, unless they have been declared in sponsorship default for a previous undertaking (see 2.D.3(ii)). While sponsorship breakdowns are very rare in Canada, if the Government of Canada determines a sponsorship group is in default of its obligations while subsequent applications are being processed, those applications will be suspended, reassessed, and possibly refused.

Groups may end their status of financial default by repaying the government any money paid to the refugees in place of the sponsors during the sponsorship period. In the case of a non-financial default where the refugees subsequently become self-sufficient or receive settlement support elsewhere, Canada has discretion to allow the sponsorship groups to submit subsequent applications.

DETAIL

Each application submitted must be reviewed to determine sponsorship eligibility. Sponsoring groups who fulfill the financial and settlement requirements to sponsor will be approved, unless they have been declared in sponsorship default for a previous undertaking. Sponsorship breakdown is very rare in Canada and most disputes are resolved through accessing appropriate supports and mediation where required.

In rare cases of default, if a sponsoring group has been found at fault (i.e. is declared in sponsorship default) for an unsuccessful past sponsorship with subsequent applications pending, the Government of Canada prepares a list of cases currently under the sponsor's care:

- For cases currently under the sponsor's support and for cases where visas have been issued, the local migration office will assess whether the sponsor is able to fulfil his/her obligations to these cases.
- Where a visa has not been issued, the local migration office will notify the overseas visa office of the default and advise them to suspend processing until alternate arrangements are made. Failing this, the case will be withdrawn (see D.1). The Government of Canada should revoke approval of the sponsorship undertaking and the overseas visa office should refuse to issue the visas to the refugees.

Groups of Five and Community Sponsor groups in default are not allowed to submit subsequent applications until they end their default status. If Sponsorship Agreement Holders are in default, their agreement with the government may be cancelled, suspended, or amended. To end a financial default, the sponsoring group must repay the government for the costs it has incurred supporting the refugees in place of the sponsors. In the case of a non-financial default where the refugees subsequently find other means to meet their settlement needs (e.g. finding housing), Canada has discretion to end the default and allow the sponsoring group to submit another application.

D.5 WHAT SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS MAY APPLY WHEN RELATIVES ARE AMONG THE SPONSORS?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider whether the scope and requirements of private sponsorship change when sponsors wish to sponsor their relatives.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Click on the considerations below to discover how Canada does it.

- (i) Do special benefits or restrictions apply to privately sponsor family members as refugees?
- (ii) What does “family member” mean for the purposes of community sponsorship of refugees?
- (iii) Is there a family sponsorship program already in place?
- (iv) What special considerations may apply when relatives are not formal members of the sponsoring group? How do sponsors communicate with relatives of the refugees residing in the resettlement country?

RESOURCES

-  Barbara Treviranus and Michael Casasola, “Canada’s Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program: A Practitioner’s Perspective of its Past and Future” (Journal of International Migration and Integration, 2003)
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12134-003-1032-0>
-  IRCC, “Procedure: One-year window of opportunity provision (OYW)”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/processing/OYW.asp>
-  Jodi Kantor and Catrin Einhorn, “What Does It Mean to Help One Family?” (New York Times, 8 September 2016)
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/10/22/world/americas/canada-refugees-syria.html>
-  IRCC, “Syrian Family Links Initiative: Connecting Syrian family members with sponsors”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/sponsor/family.asp>
-  United For Refugees Campaign, which aimed to assist by providing families top-up funds for sponsorship.
<https://www.unitedwayottawa.ca/call-for-proposals-united-for-refugees/>
-  IRCC, “Sponsor your Relatives” (web page)
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/sponsor/relatives.asp>
-  RSTP, “Can I Receive a Tax Receipt When I contribute Money to a Private Refugee Sponsorship?”
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Tax-Receipts-for-Gifts.pdf>
-  Lifeline Syria, “Some Frequently Asked Questions from Public Meetings”
<http://lifelinesyria.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Lifeline-Syria-FAQ-draft-444-pdf.pdf>

 Shauna Labman, "Private Sponsorship: Complementary or Conflicting Interests?" (Refuge, 2016)
<http://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/40266/36411>

 IRCC, "Family Sponsorship"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/sponsor/>

(i) DO SPECIAL BENEFITS OR RESTRICTIONS APPLY TO PRIVATELY SPONSOR FAMILY MEMBERS AS REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The Government of Canada's screening of sponsors is unaffected by whether the sponsoring group members are related to the refugees. Sponsorship Agreement Holders, which have charitable status, cannot issue tax receipts for contributions made to a sponsorship by a refugee's family member.

Refugee applicants must demonstrate they are eligible and admissible to resettle in Canada in their own right, regardless of their family ties in Canada. However, family ties may help refugees demonstrate their ability to establish themselves in Canada (see 2.A.1(vi)).

DETAIL

Family-linked sponsorships may be beneficial in several ways. Sponsoring groups already know the refugees well due to the family link, and since they often share the same culture, language, religion, and other traits, it is easier for the sponsoring group to help refugees adjust to life in Canada. Many newly arrived refugees use sponsorship as a mechanism to bring other relatives left behind, who are also refugees, to Canada. Knowing that family members left behind can find a way out of precarious living conditions helps already resettled refugees better integrate into Canadian society.

How the Government of Canada screens sponsors is unaffected by whether the sponsoring group members are related to the refugees.

Sponsorship Agreement Holders, which have charitable status, cannot issue tax receipts for contributions made by Canadians to privately sponsor their family members.

Refugee applicants must demonstrate they are eligible and admissible to Canada in their own right, regardless of their family ties in Canada. Having family ties in Canada may help refugees to demonstrate their ability to establish in Canada, which is one of the eligibility criteria for refugees.

RESOURCES

-  IRCC, "Determining which family members are eligible for resettlement"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/eligibility/family.asp>
-  IRCC, "Syrian Family Links Initiative: Connecting Syrian family members with sponsors"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/sponsor/family.asp>
-  RSTP, "Can I Receive a Tax Receipt When I contribute Money to a Private Refugee Sponsorship?"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Tax-Receipts-for-Gifts.pdf>
-  Jennifer Hyndman et. Al, "Private refugee sponsorship in Canada" (Forced Migration Review, 2017)
<http://www.fmreview.org/resettlement/hyndman-payne-jimenez.html>

(ii) WHAT DOES “FAMILY MEMBER” MEAN FOR THE PURPOSES OF COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP OF REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsoring groups may sponsor a refugee (“principal applicant”) and his/her “family members” to resettle in Canada. The principal applicant’s family members do not themselves have to meet the criteria for refugee status and resettlement as long as they qualify as “dependants” and are not inadmissible to Canada. Qualifying family members/dependants include spouses, common-law partners, dependent children, spouses or common-law partners’ dependent children, and dependent children of dependent children. De facto dependants may also qualify for concurrent processing so they resettle in Canada at the same time as the principal refugee family unit.

DETAIL

Sponsoring groups may sponsor a principal applicant and his/her “family members” to resettle in Canada. The family members need to independently meet the criteria for refugee status and resettlement so long as they qualify as “dependants” and are not inadmissible to Canada. “Dependants” include:

- Spouse;
- Common-law partner – an individual who has been in a conjugal relationship with a person for at least one year and either has cohabited for at least one year, or who is unable to cohabit with the person due to persecution or any form of penal control;
- Dependent children – they are (i) under 19 years of age and unmarried/not in a common-law partnership; or (ii) 19 years of age or older, have depended substantially on the financial support of the parent since before the age of 19, and are unable to be financially self-supporting due to a physical or mental condition;
- Spouse or common-law partner’s dependent children; and
- Dependent children of dependent children.

“De facto dependants” are individuals who are dependent on the principal family unit but who do not meet the definition of family member/dependant set out above. The relationship may be by blood, marriage or strictly through long association (i.e., may not necessarily be a relative). The dependency must be emotional or financial and will often be a combination of both factors. Because de facto dependants do not qualify as “family members” per Canada’s regulations, they must independently qualify for resettlement by meeting eligibility and admissibility criteria, and are ineligible to be processed under Canada’s One Year Window Program (see D.5(iii)). They may, however, qualify for concurrent processing at the same time as the principal refugee family unit.

RESOURCES

 Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/sor-2002-227/>

 IRCC, “Determining which family members are eligible for resettlement”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/eligibility/family.asp>

- IRCC, "The humanitarian and compassionate assessment: De facto family members"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/perm/hc/processing/defacto.asp>

(iii) IS THERE A FAMILY SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM ALREADY IN PLACE?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Refugees may be able to immigrate to Canada through family-class sponsorship. In this case the sponsor must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident and can only sponsor his/her spouse, common-law partner, conjugal partner, dependent children, parents, and grandparents. Resettled refugees may also apply for their dependants (see 2.D.5(ii)) to join them under Canada's "One-Year Window" provision.

DETAIL

Refugees may be able to immigrate to Canada through a family-class sponsorship. Generally, sponsors must meet the following criteria:

- They are Canadian citizens or permanent residents;
- They are at least 18 years old;
- They are sponsoring a qualifying family member: spouse, common-law partner, conjugal partner, dependent children, parents, and grandparents;
- They are able to prove that they have enough income to provide basic needs for their spouse, common-law partner, and their dependent children. If they are sponsoring parents and grandparents, sponsors must demonstrate they are earning a certain minimum level of income depending on their family size.

Refugees may also apply for their family members to reunite with them under Canada's "One Year Window" provision. The family members left behind must:

- Have been declared on the refugees' permanent residence application and sponsorship undertaking;
- Qualify as "dependants" (spouses, common-law partners, dependent children, spouse or common-law partner's dependent children, or dependent children of dependent children); and
- Have had their applications to immigrate to Canada submitted by their family members within one year of their family members receiving permanent residence.

Because they qualify as family members, they receive the same refugee status as the principal applicant and they obtain permanent residence so long as they are not inadmissible to Canada. Because de facto dependants do not qualify as "family members" per Canada's regulations (see D.2(ii)), they are ineligible to apply for reunification with the principal family unit under the One Year Window provision.

RESOURCES

- IRCC, "Determining which family members are eligible for resettlement"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/eligibility/family.asp>

- 🌐 IRCC, "Request to process family members under the one-year window of opportunity provisions"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/fam-follow.asp>

- 📄 IRCC, "OP 2 – Processing Members of the Family Class"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op02-eng.pdf>

- 🌐 IRCC, "Guide to Sponsor Parents and Grandparents"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/5772ETOC.asp>

- 🌐 Canadian Council for Refugees, "Family Reunification"
<http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/other-useful-info-family-reunification>

(iv) WHAT SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS MAY APPLY WHEN RELATIVES ARE NOT FORMAL MEMBERS OF THE SPONSORING GROUP? HOW DO SPONSORS COMMUNICATE WITH RELATIVES OF THE REFUGEES RESIDING IN THE RESETTLEMENT COUNTRY?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Even if Canadian relatives of sponsored refugees are not formal members of the sponsorship group, they will likely play a significant role in helping to deliver settlement services and assisting refugees to adjust to life in Canada. The sponsoring group should fully include Canadian relatives in creating a settlement plan that forms part of the sponsorship application. Sponsors and Canadian relatives must communicate openly and clearly to manage expectations regarding their respective roles in the sponsorship. If the relative is working with a Sponsorship Agreement Holder and would like to become a formal member of the group, the relative can request to be listed as a co-sponsor on the application.

DETAIL

Even if Canadian relatives of sponsored refugees are not formal members of the sponsorship group, sponsors should include them in the resettlement process as much as possible, if appropriate. Having the support of a family member in Canada has a significant impact in helping newly arrived refugees adjust to life in Canada.

Canadian relatives will likely want to be included in delivering resettlement services to their loved ones. From the very outset at the application stage, if the refugee applicants agree, sponsors and Canadian relatives should discuss which parties will deliver which resettlement services to the sponsored refugees. For example, Canadian relatives may offer to host their family members in their own home for the first year, provide an orientation to the community, transportation, provide emotional support, contribute funds, etc. These plans should be clearly set out in writing in the sponsoring group's Settlement Plan that forms part of the sponsorship application (see 2.B.4(ii)).

However, Canadian relatives should understand that ultimately it is the sponsors who bear the legal responsibility to provide financial and settlement support due to the sponsorship undertaking they have signed. Differences in opinions on how to help refugees integrate may lead to disputes between sponsors and Canadian relatives. For this reason, sponsors, Canadian relatives, and refugees should all communicate regularly and openly from the time of the application to manage each other's expectations regarding the sponsorship period. Sponsors should be aware of and attempt to mitigate the power imbalances inherent in their relationship with not only the refugees but also their Canadian relatives.

If the relative is working with a Sponsorship Agreement Holder/Constituent Group, the relative can become a co-sponsor to the application. Co-sponsors are not expected to deliver all the financial and settlement supports to the refugee. However, Canada considers co-sponsors legal parties to the sponsorship who can be held liable for the entire undertaking in the event of a default (see 2.D.3(ii)).

RESOURCES

 RSTP, "Managing Expectations: A Resource Kit for Refugee Sponsors"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/expectool2013.pdf>

 Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Settlement Plan for X&X"
<http://refugeeaction.ca/files/2015/11/CRR-Settlement-Plan-that-can-be-Shared-with-other-groups.pdf>

3.A REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP IN A RURAL COMMUNITY

Location: Smithers, British Columbia

Type of Sponsoring Group: Group of Five

Number of Sponsors in Group: Five

Sponsoring Since: February 2016

Sponsoring Group Description: Nurse, teacher, fire protection officer, realtor, occupational therapist, office administrator, counsellor, biologist, and lawyer.

Number of Refugees Sponsored: Two families sponsored. Family A has two parents with three children. Family B has two parents with four children, including a new baby born in Canada.

Interviewee: Pauline Mahoney



SPONSOR INTERVIEW

Did you sponsor someone you know (e.g. friend, family) or someone you did not previously know?

Family A is related to a family already living in Smithers.

We did not previously know Family B. We sponsored Family B through Canada's Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program

What was it like sponsoring someone you did not know?

It was a very good experience.

Are there any special considerations for a group sponsoring refugees to come live in a small, rural community?

Small towns can be very welcoming, open, and resourceful. It was easy to meet with social supports and plan for our newcomers' arrival. Local businesses/individuals were generous in their help with funding and donations; e.g., a local dentist provided free care, and an optometrist offered to assist with eye exams. We were also able to arrange both formal and volunteer language training services.

We recommend that groups contract the services of a professional interpreter and not rely on Arabic speakers within the community. Volunteers, while meaning well, do not always interpret correctly and can add their own biases. We had regular meetings with a trained interpreter over the phone.

How do you prepare a small community to welcome refugees? How do you resolve any tensions or apprehensions?

In the summer/autumn of 2015, there was a lot of media coverage on the Syrian refugee crisis, which reached many in our community. We also hosted a "Get to know Syria" night with food, belly dancing, a slide show/talk on Syria and a display of Syrian items (clothes, coffee pots, hookah, cups, etc.). We included presentations on the refugee sponsorship process and community plans for resettlement.

We made presentations to schools and other community groups, with an emphasis on empathy and what might feel different to newcomers and why. And finally, we hosted an "Introduction to Islam" evening with three Mosque leaders from the closest Islamic community (about four hours away).

Posters around town included my contact details so people could reach me to ask questions. We also keep people informed via email, if they have joined our mailing list.

How do you work with other vulnerable groups in the community who may perceive sponsored refugees as receiving disproportionate benefits?

The community outreach we did (described above) was very helpful. We also held specific meetings with First Nations (Canada's Indigenous peoples) leaders to discuss any issues. There was an official First Nations welcoming and public picnic about six months after the two families arrived in Smithers.

What are some of the challenges in rural sponsorships?

Our top challenges were:

1. Work opportunities: Family A is a professional couple with university degrees. Finding work within their fields of expertise is a challenge. Family B has lower education and literacy and arrived with no English skills, which presented separate challenges in finding suitable employment.
2. A lack of Arabic community (the closest one is a four hour drive away) to help build the families' community support networks.

What was the experience of arrival and the refugees' first weeks like?

It was a mix of excitement, relief, anticipation, and anxiety. We had a strong desire to reassure the newcomers that they were welcome, that we were committed to their well-being, and we wanted them to know they were safe. We also recognized how terribly confused, bewildered, and frightened these families might be – not to mention exhausted! The initial weeks were harder for Family B as Family A had relatives in Smithers.

The first few weeks were intense and busy. There was so much work to do, but our preparation helped ease the way as we knew who to contact and had completed as much paperwork in advance as we could.

How did you find accessing settlement services in your community?

Excellent. We met well before the newcomers arrived to ensure we knew what could be offered and how to access it. The settlement agency appreciated the early contact so they could plan and prepare as well.

What was the best part of your sponsorship experience?

The profound experience of “walking alongside” a family as they struggled to adapt and adjust to a new life forced upon them.

FURTHER READING

- 🌐 Erin Anderssen, “Welcome to the Country: The small community of Altona, Man., was settled in the 1880s by Mennonite refugees. In 2016, it opened its doors to five families of Syrian Muslims seeking a refuge of their own” (The Globe and Mail, 5 January 201)

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/welcome-to-the-country/article30820904/>
- 🌐 Canada’s small communities can be ideal for Syrian refugees, says rural sponsor”

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-tuesday-edition-1.3345339/canada-s-small-communities-can-be-ideal-for-syrian-refugees-says-rural-sponsor-1.3347410>
- 🌐 Greg Berg, “Resettling families in rural Manitoba” (23 December 2015)

<https://www.albertafarmexpress.ca/2015/12/23/resettling-refugee-families-in-rural-manitoba/>
- 🌐 Julie Ireton, “Small Canadian towns opening their doors to Syrian refugees” (CBC News, 3 December 2015)

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/small-towns-syrian-refugees-1.3347985>
- 🌐 Riley Laychuk, “Newcomers face challenges in small-town Canada, but this one is ‘heaven’” (CBC News, 21 October 2016)

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/refugee-study-brandon-university-1.3814547>
- 🌐 Lila MacLellan, “The small Canadian county that banded together to bring Syrian refugees into their community” (Quartz, 9 July 2016)

<https://qz.com/725183/citizens-of-a-small-canadian-county-have-resettled-30-syrian-refugees/>
- 🌐 Shannon VanRaes, “Small towns with a big heart” (Manitoba Co-operator, 23 December 2015)

<https://www.manitobacooperator.ca/news-opinion/news/local/small-towns-with-a-big-heart/>

- Michael Tutton, "Syrian Refugees Canada: Small Town Hospitality Helps Soothe Rough Start" (Huffington Post, 16 April 2016)
http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/04/16/small-town-hospitality-helps-soothe-rough-start-for-syrian-family-in-nova-scotia_n_9710670.html

3.B A SYNAGOGUE'S EXPERIENCE SPONSORING REFUGEES OF ANOTHER FAITH

Location: Oakville, Ontario

Name of Sponsoring Group: Abraham's Children Together (ACT)

Type of Sponsoring Group: Sponsorship Agreement Holder

Number of Sponsors in Group: Three organizations

Sponsoring Since: 2015

Sponsoring Group Description: Shaarei Beth El Synagogue in partnership with Maple Grove United Church and Canadians in Support of Refugees in Dire Need

Website: <http://www.sbe.ca>

Interviewee: Rabbi Stephen Wise



SPONSOR INTERVIEW

What was it like sponsoring someone you do not know?

It was very interesting because it's unusual for a Jewish group to sponsor a Syrian refugee. However, after thought and discussion, we realized that it didn't matter the religion, gender, age, or ethnic background of the refugees. They were human beings and as a Jewish people we know all too well that we were discriminated against when we were refugees attempting to come to Canada through this past century. We therefore resolved to help bring this family over no matter their country of origin or Islamic background.

What made you decide to work with another faith group to pursue a sponsorship?

Our faith groups have worked together many times over the past few years in interfaith dialogue and exchange. We have pulled the curtain, so to speak, by going to each other's houses of worship, meeting one on one, and engaging in open dialogue about issues that divide us and bring us closer together. After building this trust and brotherhood, it was not difficult to work together to sponsor a refugee family.

How has faith been a motivator for you to pursue this partnership and sponsor refugees together?

Caring for the stranger is one of the highest values of Judaism. We use this as the basis of our faith. We remember that we too were strangers in the land of Egypt and treated as slaves. When we became a free people, we resolved to remember that experience and never treat the stranger as we were once treated. While this happened thousands of years ago, it's a commandment that rings true in every era including today. Judaism reminds us that we must welcome the guest, feed the hungry, help the oppressed – and sponsoring the refugee is the epitome of living out these values.

What are the advantages of partnering across faiths?

We had already established a level of trust, and working together made our bonds even stronger. We visited each other's houses of worship when the refugee family came to Canada and wanted to meet the faith communities that sponsored them. We have since gone further in creating more interfaith experiences for the people of Oakville and Halton region such as an interfaith summer camp and interfaith walk for peace.

Moreover, when crises happen, such as the shooting at the mosque in Quebec City in January 2017, we were quick to mobilize and together plan an appropriate response – which was to circle the local mosque with people holding hands, showing our support and care for all Muslims in this time of hatred and violence.

What are some challenges?

There was some initial hesitancy of some in the community to reach out to people coming from [Syria]. After that, there were also some challenges in Canada. As we looked for housing, some landlords did not want to rent to a large refugee family. Some companies were hesitant to hire refugees when we looked for jobs. But these were more the exception than the rule; we had more positive than negative experiences finding housing, employment, school, and health resources.

How many sponsorships have you pursued together?

This was the only one, but we did provide leadership and advice to other groups. Our synagogue then became a helping sponsor to another local group and there is discussion as we speak about sponsoring another family.

How does this partnership impact the refugees you are sponsoring?

The family was overwhelmed that a Jewish and Christian group knew of their fate and was willing to both raise the funds and bring them here. When I met the children, and talked about Judaism and Israel, they were in disbelief that we helped and also curious about our faith. Soon after they arrived, they were invited to be honoured at one of our worship services. Our congregation came out to meet them and the youngest son offered beautiful words of thanks. There wasn't a dry eye in the room. We ordered middle eastern food that they appreciated, but an even more meaningful gesture was when the mother in the family baked a special seven-layer dessert at the synagogue that we all enjoyed immensely.

What is the experience of arrival and the refugees' first weeks like?

The arrival was very exciting and happened so quickly. We knew it could be any day but we had to drop everything and go. One of the church members hosted the refugee family for the first few weeks until their new house was vacated and ready.

I remember meeting the family at the airport; they were very happy but still overwhelmed by what was happening. A special moment was the day we moved them into their house. We had the moving truck come and were moving in furniture and they were helping figure out what should go in which room. We finally took a break and all sat in the living room eating pizza. Breaking bread together overcame all language barriers and we sat and laughed and were rejuvenated both physically and spiritually.

How did you find accessing settlement services in your community?

It has been an excellent experience. The town rallied behind the resettlement. There was a meeting at city hall where all interested parties gathered to combine resources and explain how each group could help. The Community Foundation (a local granting organization) helped lead the charge and, even a year later, provided grants to continue the resettlement process because even though the deadline was one year, we knew it would take longer.

What is the best part of your sponsorship experience?

There is something beautiful about helping another human being start life anew. Not only did we help bring the family over, we worked together to provide them with all the tools to succeed – housing, food, clothing, healthcare, job opportunities, educational opportunities, a computer, and a car. With these pieces in place, we have a very strong feeling they will succeed in settling well into Canada and not only stand on their own two feet but thrive and give back to the country that helped them.

How are the refugees you sponsored doing today?

By all accounts, really well. The father and older sons have jobs, and the older sons plan to attend university. The younger children are picking up English quite quickly and are in school and doing well. They are self-sufficient and earning income and acclimating to Ontario quite smoothly.

FURTHER READING

- 🌐 Amnesty International, “Canadian Refugee Champion: Abraham Children Together’s Story”
<http://www.amnesty.ca/blog/canadian-refugee-champion-abrahams-children-togethers-story>
- 🌐 Nicholas Keung, “Christian, Muslim, and Jewish congregations unite to embrace refugee friends” (The Star, 27 November 2016)
<https://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/2016/11/27/christian-muslim-and-jewish-congregations-unite-to-embrace-refugee-friends.html>
- 🌐 Nicholas Keung, “Religious groups in Halton join hands to sponsor Syrian refugees” (The Star, 2 November 2015)
<https://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2015/11/02/religious-groups-in-halton-join-hands-to-sponsor-syrian-refugees.html>
- 🌐 Meghan Mast, “Hutterite help: A refugee sponsorship story” (Menonite Central Committee, 2 September 2016)
<https://mcccanada.ca/stories/hutterite-help-refugee-sponsorship-story>

- 🌐 UNHCR, “Christian community welcomes Syrian family to Canada”
<http://www.unhcr.ca/news/christian-community-welcomes-syrians/>

- 🌐 Rachel Baarda, “Interfaith Groups sponsor Syrian refugees”
http://www.faithincanada150.ca/initiatives/1000stories/60_interfaith_groups_sponsor_syrian_refugees

- 🌐 Affan Chowdhry, “Religious groups make leaps of faith to support Syrian refugees” (The Globe and Mail, 10 September 2015) (news)
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/religious-groups-make-leaps-of-faith-to-support-syrian-refugees/article26322617/>

3.C STUDENTS HELPING STUDENTS THROUGH UNIQUE SETTLEMENT PROGRAMS

Location: National

Name of Sponsoring Group: World University Service of Canada (WUSC)/Entraide universitaire mondiale du Canada (EUMC)

Type of Sponsoring Group: Sponsorship Agreement Holder

Number of Sponsors in Group: Approximately 80 campuses sponsor, with a minimum of 5 volunteers per sponsoring group.

Sponsoring Since: 1978. WUSC has been sponsoring student refugees through other immigration mechanisms since the 1950s.

Sponsoring Group Description: Primarily composed of college or university student volunteers, with staff or faculty support.

Website: <https://150.wusc.ca/>

Interviewee: Michelle Manks



SPONSOR INTERVIEW

What is WUSC?

World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is a non-profit international development organization that works to improve education, employment, and empowerment opportunities for youth around the world. Through the Student Refugee Program (SRP), WUSC delivers a unique youth-to-youth refugee settlement program that combines sponsorship with post-secondary education, and puts Canadian institutions and students at the heart of the funding and support structure. WUSC has sponsored over 1,700 students to date.

How does the WUSC program work?

WUSC posts a call for applications for the SRP in specific countries of asylum where we have strong partnerships (currently Kenya, Malawi, Jordan, and Lebanon). We accept applications through partners on the ground, who screen the applications and administer language assessments (as proficiency in English or French is required for studies in Canada). Interviews are conducted by WUSC staff and members of UNHCR and/or NGO partners who deliver education programming in the host country. Once students are selected, they follow a pre-departure curriculum (including English or French classes) offered by WUSC and partners to prepare them for studies and resettlement to Canada.

How has WUSC supported refugees historically?

Since its origins, WUSC has used a unique campus-based funding model which combines tuition waivers granted by the institutions with a student tax that supports the living expenses of each refugee student. It is an interesting opportunity for Canadian youth to meet and interact with young people from around the world, and deepen their understanding of global issues while also helping them develop their cross-cultural competencies and communication skills.

How has the program evolved to what it is today?

Over the past four decades, the program has grown from having one sponsoring campus to nearly 80 participating institutions annually, and from one student per year to 150. In recent years, campuses have increased the number of students they each sponsor, and a growing number of college and polytechnic institutions have joined the program.

How is WUSC's sponsorship program structured?

WUSC is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) and WUSC student groups known as "Local Committees" act as the organization's Constituent Groups. Each group must have a minimum of five committed volunteers to be approved for sponsorship.

How are students involved in sponsoring refugees?

Student groups act as the official sponsors in our model of refugee sponsorship, and are responsible for all aspects of the sponsorship, from securing the necessary funding (via Memoranda of Understanding with the administration which commit to waiver agreements, and student levies that are collected following WUSC-led referendums), to providing the social and integration support to the incoming refugee student each year.

What is unique about your program?

There are several aspects that are unique:

- It is the only program in the world that combines resettlement with post-secondary education;
- It is the only youth-to-youth, peer-support resettlement program, and engages post-secondary institutions and alumni of the program in refugee sponsorship;
- We offer a minimum of 12 months of pre-departure training to the refugee youth who have been selected for the program, including advanced language classes (and the TOEFL/IELTS test), in depth cultural orientations and introductions to the Canadian academic system;
- In Canada, youth-led sponsoring groups are heavily involved in public engagement campaigns that aim to foster greater understanding and generate public support for refugee sponsorship; and
- Pre-established part-time employment opportunities are offered on campus as part of the sponsorship.

What is the experience of arrival and the refugees' first weeks like?

Refugee students arrive as a cohort (all together by country of asylum) in late August and are welcomed by their sponsoring groups at the airport. If they arrive before their room in the university or college residence is ready, they typically stay with a student volunteer and/or their family for the first few weeks. Before school starts, the sponsoring group provides the new student with an orientation to their campus and community, and helps them open a bank account and complete all of the paperwork required of new residents of Canada: applications for provincial health care, for a social insurance number, for their permanent I.D., etc. In early September, students begin their classes (often a reduced course load in the first semester), and meet with their sponsoring group at least once per week on campus.

How do you find accessing settlement services in your community?

As our sponsorships are linked to post-secondary institutions, most services that are usually offered by settlement service organizations are typically accessed on campus through the office that supports international students or other offices that support students: cultural and city orientations, employment services, mentorship programs, housing support, healthcare, counselling, health insurance, bus passes, etc. WUSC students seldom use the settlement services in the community.

What is the best part of your sponsorship experience?

The personal connections and friendships, the learning opportunities provided, working with youth (both those in Canada and the refugee youth) and within a network of individuals who are passionate about creating equal opportunities and welcoming communities, the incredible and inspiring individuals sponsored through the program.

FURTHER READING

🌐 WUSC, "Student Refugee Program"
<https://srp.wusc.ca/>

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYo-6NzdRD8>

- 🌐 WUSC, “Stories of Belonging”
<https://150.wusc.ca/>

- 🌐 WUSC, “Our Initiatives”
<https://wusc.ca/initiatives/>

- 🌐 Samantha Relich, “Inside the Student Refugee Program” (The Varsity, 27 January 2014)
<https://thevarsity.ca/2014/01/27/inside-the-student-refugee-program/>

- 🌐 Albert Park, “Sponsoring a Community: The story of a refugee student at McGill” (The McGill Tribune, 26 January 2015)
<http://mcgilltribune.com/student-refugee-sponsor-wusc-mcgill/>

3.D LESSONS LEARNED BY A LARGE SPONSORING GROUP

Location: Ottawa, Ontario

Name of Sponsoring Group: Outaouais Refugee Sponsorship Group

Type of Sponsoring Group: Constituent Group of a Sponsorship Agreement Holder

Number of Sponsors in Group: 62

Sponsoring Since: May 2015

Sponsoring Group Description: Lawyers, doctors, teachers, nurses, social workers, a dentist, a real estate agent, a carpenter, financial advisers, IT tech workers, government employees. About 1/3 are retired.

Number of Refugees Sponsored: 4 Blended Visa Office-Referral (BVOR) families

Interviewee: Peter Showler



SPONSOR INTERVIEW

Did you sponsor someone you know (e.g. friend, family) or someone you did not previously know?

We selected all four families from the Government of Canada's Blended Visa Office-Referral refugee lists. We used selection criteria: families, minimum three children, maximum five. Not all Syrian.

What was it like sponsoring someone you did not know?

There was no problem sponsoring strangers. Most of our group had no experience with refugees, although several had cross-cultural experience. We formed close emotional attachments very quickly.

How was it that your sponsoring group grew to its size? What made you decide to have such a big sponsoring group?

The group grew organically. The original idea was to form a sponsorship group of 12-15 people to sponsor one family. We required a \$2,500 entry contribution. Within two weeks, we had more than 25 people asking to join. We considered starting separate groups; instead we decided to do multiple sponsorships with the same group. Within a month, we had 54 members. The remainder trickled in although we referred many to other groups. In my view, a group of 15 is a maximum number for one family, to share the work but also to establish a personal relationship with the family. Our model worked very well for multiple families.

What are some of the advantages of a large sponsoring group?

We had a variety of professional skills to deal with the extraordinary range of integration demands on a new family, and people were available to share tasks and transport. Small groups are often worn down after a few months; we had lots of reinforcements. It also allowed us to offer one-on-one language training sessions for specific family members and lots of people for social events.

What are some disadvantages/challenges?

Too many group members can overwhelm a family; it can be too many strangers at once. Also, inter-group communication can be a problem.

How do you coordinate a large sponsoring group?

We had a strong leadership committee (three people) and divided the group into functional committees (employment, health, housing, interpreters, education, documents, IT, social activities). We then assigned a core group of 10 members who would do all the basic integration activities for the first two months for a specific family. After two months, other group members, who had met the family at social occasions, would get involved with specific activities (social visit, language training, etc.). The leaders and the committee heads would have contact with every family from the beginning of the sponsorship.

What is the experience of arrival and the refugees' first weeks like?

The arrival is delicate and unique to each family. We had rental accommodation available for each family. We allowed almost a week for the family to acclimatize with general activities (tour of city, visit to stores, etc.) before beginning detailed work of school, language training, setting up banking, registering for health insurance, etc. There is some expertise in knowing about Resettlement Assistance Programs, health insurance, schools, bus passes, etc. Group members became quite adept by the third sponsorship.

How do you find accessing settlement services in your community?

In the beginning, some agencies were overwhelmed. In general, the schools were excellent, both primary and secondary school. There were not enough language training programs, especially ones that provided day care. By July 2016, there was some improvement, and Refugee 613 (a local organization that was created to help facilitate refugee support) was very helpful. Also, the Anglican Sponsorship Agreement Holder was a very good source of information. Many municipal programs (swimming, summer camps) were helpful.

What is the best part of your sponsorship experience?

By far, the deep affections that quickly arose between the families and group members, especially the core group members who were doing the original contact work for the first two months. There are some deep friendships that continue far after the sponsorship (two of four sponsorships are over but relations continue).

How are the refugees you sponsored doing today?

The father of the first group, after six months of part-time employment after the sponsorship ended, now has very good full-time employment. The family is happy, and the two children are thriving in school. The youngest starts school in the fall. The second family (single parent with five kids) continues on social assistance but the oldest son has full-time summer employment. After early friction at school, all five children are thriving. The other two families are in mid-sponsorship and doing well. The adults in two of the families have serious dental problems that are not covered by government assistance, which is a challenge.

3.E A SPONSORING ORGANIZATION THAT WELCOMES MEMBERS OF THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY TO CANADA

Location: Ottawa, Ontario

Name of Sponsoring Group: Capital Rainbow Refuge

Type of Sponsoring Group: Constituent Group of a Sponsorship Agreement Holder

Number of Sponsors in Group: Approximately 20

Sponsoring Since: 2010

Sponsoring Group Description: Primarily LGBTQ members of the Ottawa community including professionals, lawyers, and law students.

Number of Refugees Sponsored: Approximately 40

Website: <http://www.capitalrainbow.ca/>

Interviewee: Lisa Hébert



SPONSOR INTERVIEW

Did you sponsor someone you know (e.g. friend, family) or did not previously know?

Many of the individuals, couples, and families that we sponsor are referred to us by NGOs or allies overseas. We are also approached directly by LGBTQ peoples who are on the run and are requesting assistance. None have started as a [Canadian] family connection.

The bulk of our sponsorships are through the named private sponsorship process. Some have also come as Blended Visa Office-Referral (BVOR) refugees or Government-Assisted Refugees, and we have organized support groups for them. With the named private sponsorships, we first get to know the refugees through lengthy Skype sessions to prepare their application. Then the group also connects with them through social media. We become their lifeline and the relationship gets strong quite quickly.

How do sponsors of vulnerable groups work together with governments?

Most of our sponsorships are through a program called the Rainbow Resettlement Assistance Program (Rainbow RAP). We are honoured to have been the first group in Canada to have sponsored under the Rainbow RAP in 2011, when we welcomed a lesbian couple from South East Asia.

What is the Rainbow Resettlement Assistance Program?

The Rainbow RAP provides some seed funding that represents a lump sum for settlement and three months of income support for the sponsored refugees. It encourages groups to engage in sponsorship because the fundraising obligations are a little less daunting. The program requires us to apply through a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH), but does not impact the SAH's quota; in other words, doesn't reduce the SAH's ability to sponsor other cases. The Rainbow RAP allows us to sponsor from any visa post, which is very helpful as LGBTQ refugees do not present from the same war zones that tend to produce other refugees. The Rainbow RAP also provides some starter furniture and linens, which is appreciated.

How is sponsorship of LGBTQ refugees different from sponsoring non-LGBTQ refugees?

LGBTQ refugees have more potential places of persecution: State, militarized groups or gangs, community, and their own family. When they have to run, they are often at great risk because the only countries they can flee to also have persecutory laws, and they cannot seek support from their own ethnic communities because they could also harm them.

Because of the tremendous dangers and harm that we have witnessed from the community we have sponsored, we have adopted higher levels of confidentiality. We don't identify the newcomers by country, and instead leave it up to them. For people who have left everything behind, defining their own identity is the beginning of empowerment. We also don't even suggest media interviews or speaking engagements in the first year of arrival.

On arrival, many tell us they are reluctant to engage with their own diaspora. We recommend that their first housing is with a group member, and this is an ideal period for the group to engage intensively with orientation and settlement. The temporary housing lasts between six weeks to six months. We tend to get to know people as we engage with them for their sponsorship and the bonds we form can be very close. Many are quick to refer to us as their "family," and though this is not something we propose, we have to work hard to live up to that trust.

What does the community do to support the sponsorship of LGBTQ refugees?

Capital Rainbow Refuge has developed four workshops for new groups, and each workshop runs between 2-3 hours. We start with the Settlement Plan, talk about everything involved in settlement, and the more challenging issues which involve managing expectations, ethics, and power imbalance. We don't work with groups unless their members attend our four workshops, and show that they have the capacity to take on a sponsorship.

Even Canadian-born sexual minorities can have a harder time being accepted, and discrimination persists. It can take time for a lesbian or gay person to come to terms with their own identity, and to find the strength to manage occasional situations that are not always welcoming, so it is beneficial that the Rainbow RAP is able to bring together members of the LGBTQ community to support sexual minority newcomers. It is important that they not be alone as they try to find their way in our country.

Our groups have a great deal of experience navigating our country and have a wealth of knowledge to share. We think it is important that a group have the resources to support the newcomer, for instance a trans newcomer should be supported by a group with trans expertise, and someone with HIV should find expertise on this issue in his or her group. We're proud of the strides some have made. To stay with the HIV example, our groups have been able to turn around individuals who thought their life was over, and to help them transition to healthy people who envision dying eventually of something else.

What is the experience of arrival and refugees' first weeks like?

Coming down the escalator at the airport to be greeted by a group that has committed to support them is a magical experience for both the newcomer and group members. The first few weeks are busy with social events where they form bonds. The newcomers also are quickly introduced to their new community, assisted in getting ID, registered for school, trained in how to use public transportation, and settlement begins!

How did you find accessing settlement services in your community?

We have accessed some services, like the language schools, some courses like workplace prep, doing taxes and what the different levels of government do, credentials recognition, and employment postings. Counselling is also very valuable, though funding in these areas has been precarious. The settlement agencies don't tend to have services that are specialized for our community, but they are working hard to become more welcoming.

What has been the best part of your sponsorship experience?

It is incredibly rewarding to help people build new lives. Their hope for the future is uplifting for everyone involved. That hope and sense of future is an incredible gift to the sponsorship group members, giving our lives renewed meaning and purpose. It is very meaningful to be part of a community of people who are linked by love and caring.

How are the refugees you have sponsored doing today?

We are proud to say that they are all engaged in school or working. There are undoubtedly challenges in transferring careers or a life in another language to the Canadian experience, and there are ups and downs. Some suffer from post-traumatic stress, which has interfered with learning our language. On balance, though, their lives are moving forward and are continually blooming.

Our group recently attended a graduation at Adult High School, and it felt like our whole group was graduating, and sharing in our graduate's award for a high GPA and most promising future, with its next chapter at university. When another man got a promotion at work, or another woman got her first job, we feel those life milestones and achievements together. We are very lucky to be able to participate in this program that allows us to work with vulnerable newcomers. Some of our group members are motivated to get involved because they look forward to the opportunity to save a life, and throughout the process, they realize that they themselves are the ones whose lives were also saved.

FURTHER READING

- 🌐 Capital Rainbow Refuge, "What is a LGBT Refugee?"
<http://www.capitalrainbow.ca/>
- 🌐 Capital Rainbow Refuge, "Testimonials"
<http://www.capitalrainbow.ca/testimonials>
- 🌐 RSTP, "LGBTI Refugee Sponsorship Pilot Project"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/special-initiatives/lgbti-refugee-sponsorship-pilot-project/>
- 🌐 Rainbow Refugee website
<https://www.rainbowrefugee.com/>

- 🌐 Rainbow Refugee, "Report on LGBTQ+ Refugee Blended Sponsorship Pilot"
<https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/CIMM/Brief/BR8905621/br-external/RainbowRefugee-2-e.pdf>

3.F ALL ABOUT SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT HOLDERS

Location: Ottawa, Ontario

Name of Sponsoring Group: Anglican Diocese of Ottawa

Type of Sponsoring Group: Sponsorship Agreement Holder

Number of Sponsors in Group: Approximately 70 Constituent Groups or Co-Sponsor Groups with approximately 1,000 volunteers

Sponsoring Since: 1979

Sponsoring Group Description: All types of Canadians – members of our parishes, groups of neighbours, and groups of co-workers

Website: <http://www.ottawa.anglican.ca/>

Interviewee: Don Smith



SPONSOR INTERVIEW

Did you sponsor someone you know (e.g. friend, family) or did not previously know?

Our Constituent Groups and Co-Sponsor Groups have sponsored both unknown refugees (e.g. Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) refugees) and family-linked, sponsor-referred, “named” refugees.

How were you connected with the refugees you sponsored?

It is generally a Canadian friend or family member of the refugees overseas who approaches the Constituent Group or the Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) requesting help in sponsoring their friend or relative. Sometimes, when a group has already sponsored a BVOR refugee, that newcomer will ask their sponsoring group to sponsor the friend or relative who has been left overseas. This is known as the “echo effect” and it is very common.

What is it like sponsoring someone you do not know?

Refugees are like people everywhere. Some are outgoing, some are ambitious, some are introverted, some are badly traumatized and depressed. Each person is different and so each relationship is different. When the newcomer is friendly and eager to learn, it can be the most wonderful experience in the world. When the newcomer is suffering from trauma, depression, or another serious physical or mental health issue, it can be very hard work.

What is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder?

A SAH is a corporation that has signed an agreement with the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada that allows it to sponsor refugees under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program, the Visa Office-Referred program, the Blended Visa Office-Referred program, or the Joint Assistance Sponsorship program.

There are approximately 110 SAHs across Canada. The majority are faith-based or ethno-cultural corporations, although some are service-providing organizations (i.e. settlement agencies). Small SAHs sponsor refugees directly. Large SAHs partner with Constituent Groups and/or Co-Sponsors who do the work directly with the newcomers.

How are SAHs structured?

A SAH is a corporation incorporated under federal or provincial law. It is typically a not-for-profit, charitable agency managed by a Board of Directors. As a registered charity, its financial activities are governed by the Income Tax Act and Regulations. Large SAHs will have a small paid staff, small SAHs will be run by volunteers. Large SAHs will partner with Constituent Groups and/or Co-Sponsors to work directly with the newcomers. Small SAHs may work directly with the newcomers. Regardless of whether the SAH is large or small, it cannot relinquish or transfer its liability for the sponsorship to the Constituent Group and/or Co-Sponsor.

What are Constituent Groups and how does the SAH interact with them?

A Constituent Group is either a group of individual Canadians or (an) individual Canadian(s) in conjunction with a corporation, unincorporated organization or association, which a SAH can authorize to sponsor refugees under its sponsorship agreement. Each SAH may determine the modalities of the authorization. For many faith-based SAHs, their Constituent Groups are their assemblies, parishes, or congregations.

What are the advantages of faith-based infrastructures to organizing private sponsorship?

There are three advantages. The first is that supporting refugees (like helping the homeless or aiding victims of natural disasters) is generally part of the acknowledged mission of faith-based charities, which means that the charity can issue a receipt to the donor for income tax purposes. The second is that faith-based organizations are generally structured in a hierarchical fashion that lends itself to the SAH/Constituent Group/Co-Sponsor model and allows the work of sponsorship to be distributed across a large volunteer base. The third is that many faith-based organizations are involved in complementary services such as affordable housing, mental health counselling, or services to immigrants.

Why are so many SAHs faith-based organizations?

There is no requirement for a SAH to be faith-based. However, there are factors (described above) that promote faith-based organizations taking on the role of SAHs. An additional factor is historical. It was the Mennonite church, along with the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society, that signed the first Master Agreements for sponsorship with the Minister of Employment and Immigration Canada at the time of the Indochinese refugee crisis in 1979.

How do you select refugees to sponsor?

For Visa Office-Referred, Blended Visa Office-Referred, and Joint Assistance Sponsorship cases, the sponsor selects the refugee from a list of cases provided by the Government of Canada. These cases were originally referred to the Government of Canada's missions overseas by UNHCR. For sponsor-referred cases (also known as family-linked cases or "named" cases), the refugee is generally referred to the sponsoring group by a relative or friend in Canada, although occasionally, the referral is made by a non-governmental agency overseas, perhaps a religious or humanitarian organization. For sponsor-referred cases, there are generally more requests for sponsorship than the SAH has the capacity or the allocation of application spaces to handle. The SAH therefore needs a way to prioritize cases for acceptance. Typical considerations for prioritization are: (1) date of referral (i.e. first-in, first-out); (2) credibility of individual or organization making the referral; and (3) vulnerability of the refugee.

What is the experience of arrival and the refugees' first weeks like?

The first few weeks require the full-time commitment of several volunteers. Tasks involve finding housing and furnishings, applying for provincial health insurance, language testing, school enrollment, introduction to the banking system, application for child benefits, finding day care for pre-school children, instructing newcomers on public transit and other public services, and dealing with immediate medical issues.

How do you find accessing settlement services in your community?

Settlement services including language assessment, language training, and employment counselling are readily accessible and very useful.

What is the best part of your sponsorship experience?

The knowledge that we have given people, who had no possibility of a future in their country of origin or country of refuge, new lives in a safe and welcoming country.

How are the refugees you have sponsored doing today?

Some remain (very, very) close. Some have drifted away. Some of the young people are extremely successful, graduating cum laude and completing graduate studies. Sadly, none of the adults who arrived with professional qualifications – lawyers, doctors, engineers, teachers – have been able to work in their field. Some of the young people have dropped out of school and are working at minimum wage jobs. Some have had Canadian babies. Some still suffer from the physical and mental disabilities that they brought to Canada. You learn to take a long-term view, celebrate the successes and share the sorrows.

FURTHER READING

- 🔗 Shauna Labman, "Private Sponsorship: Complementary or Conflicting Interests?" (Refuge, 2016)
<https://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/viewFile/40266/36411>
- 🔗 Barbara Treviranus and Michael Casasola, "Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program: A Practitioner's Perspective of its Past and Future" (Journal of International Migration and Integration, 2003)
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12134-003-1032-0>
- 🔗 RSTP, "Sponsorship Agreement Holders"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/sponsorship-agreement-holders/>

- 🌐 SAH Association
<http://www.sahassociation.com/>

- 🌐 IRCC, “Sponsorship Agreement Holders – Sponsoring refugees”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/sah.asp>

- 🌐 William Janzen, “The 1979 MCC Canada Master Agreement for the Sponsorship of Refugees in Historical Perspective”
<http://jms.uwinnipeg.ca/index.php/jms/article/download/1184/1176>

3.G THE EXPERIENCE OF A BUSINESS SPONSORING REFUGEES

Location: Guelph, Ontario

Name of Sponsoring Group: Danby Appliances

Type of Sponsoring Group: We worked with Sponsorship Agreement Holders to sponsor refugees

Number of Sponsors in Group: One (a business) with the support of 800 community volunteers.

Sponsoring Since: 2015

Sponsoring Group Description: All backgrounds

Interviewee: Jim Estill



SPONSOR INTERVIEW

Did you previously know the refugees you sponsored?

We didn't know the families we sponsored, but we started with family and friends of people already here in Canada.

What motivated you to support refugees?

It is a humanitarian crisis. I did not want to grow old and say I stood by and did nothing. One of the phrases I repeat all the time is "Do the Right Thing." It is actually how we try to run Danby Appliances. So I am simply trying to "Do the Right Thing."

How are you involved in supporting refugees?

I am immersed in it. I meet with refugees and volunteers daily. It is a full-time job on top of the already full time job of running my company.

What advantages do businesses have in sponsorship or supporting refugees over other sponsors?

Business people know how to organize and structure things. They know how to get things done. I always tell people “if you can run a company with 800 people, you can run a volunteer organization with 800 people.”

In our case, we organized it like a business with a director of health, director of education, director of housing, director of jobs, etc. The director of mentors assigned each family an Arabic speaking mentor and family and 4-5 English speaking mentors. Each mentor group had checklists – set up a bank account, get a doctor, get a Health Card, get a bus pass, ride the bus, get a library card, set up a computer with Duolingo, etc. And then there are bi-weekly scorecard check-ins to see what is needed; for example, a family might need a Skype tutor or a soccer team for the child, etc.

What challenges are involved when businesses sponsor or support refugees?

We don't have the full support of our customers – particularly those in the US (where most of our sales are) – so some choose not to buy from us.

How can businesses be leveraged in support of refugees?

Businesses have resources – not only cash, but staff, trucks, warehouses, etc. Businesses have contacts. One of the most important things for refugees is jobs and business people can influence other business people to give these people a break and offer them work.

What sorts of measures can businesses take to integrate refugees into the workplace?

The most obvious is hire them. However the most important is helping them learn English. Implementing English as a Second Language training, English word of the day, English lunch buddies, English learning programs with Skype tutors, TV, Mango Language, Duolingo, tea circle, etc. are all helpful.

What is the experience of arrival and the refugees' first weeks like?

The first week is mostly elated, happy to be safe. Then reality sets in – learning English is hard, I miss my friends and family, my education and experience are not recognized, I am dependent to get to my doctor appointment, get my bus pass (and riding the bus), and buy my groceries, etc. I think many found it frustrating. Then they move to independence over time.

How do you find accessing settlement services in your community?

Excellent. They are a good group. Well intentioned. Somewhat over-worked.

What is the best part of your sponsorship experience?

Seeing someone start a new life and blossom is very fulfilling. Seeing children grow and thrive. Knowing you have made a difference.

How are the refugees you sponsored doing today?

Success is families working, speaking English, supporting themselves, some degree of integration. From where we are now, I think that over 80% of the 58 families we sponsored are successful using this definition. Progress varies from family to family, and learning English is still a hard part for some.

FURTHER READING

- 🌐 Mark Mann, “The Man who Saved 200 Syrian Refugees” (Toronto Life, 20 December 2016)
<http://torontolife.com/city/life/jim-estill-the-man-who-saved-200-syrian-refugees/>

- 🌐 “Guelph CEO Jim Estill sponsoring 50 Syrian refugee families” (CBC News, 26 November 2015)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/danby-ceo-jim-estill-sponsors-50-syrian-refugee-families-in-guelph-1.3338705>

- 🌐 Karolyn Coorsh, “58 families, 800 volunteers: How one man runs refugee sponsorship like a business”
<http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/58-families-800-volunteers-how-one-man-runs-refugee-sponsorship-like-a-business-1.3225364>

- 🌐 Lina Duque, “Sponsoring Refugees as a Workplace is Good for Business” (Huffpost, 22 December 2015)
http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/lina-duque/volunteering-refugees_b_8854878.html

- 🌐 Kithio Mwanzia, “Guelph Chamber Launches Corporate Challenge Supporting Syrian Refugee Families”
<http://www.guelphchamber.com/files/SyrianRefugeeEffortsLaunch.pdf>

- 🌐 ZINC, “This amazing man paid for 58 refugee families to resettle in Canada”
<https://www.facebook.com/ThisIsZinc/videos/657971534403516/>

3.H TRAINING AND INFORMATION FOR REFUGEE SPONSORS IN CANADA

Location: Toronto, Ontario; National

Name of Sponsoring Group: Refugee Sponsorship Training Program

Type of Sponsoring Group: Training and Information

Website: <http://www.rstp.ca/>

Interviewee: Yosief Araya



SPONSOR INTERVIEW

What is RSTP?

The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) is administered by Catholic Crosscultural Services (CCS). The main purpose of RSTP is to respond to the training and informational needs of the refugee sponsorship community and individuals who are interested in sponsoring through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program. In addition, RSTP supports the promotion and matching of Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program – a cost sharing initiative between the Canadian government and refugee sponsors to resettle high needs refugees.

How and why was RSTP formed?

RSTP was created in 1998 to address the ongoing information, support, and training needs of private sponsors. CCS has been delivering the program since 2008. Over time, RSTP has evolved and now offers a robust collection of training and information materials in various media, expanded workshop options, outreach to new and ongoing sponsors, and is using technology to reach sponsors regardless of location through online courses and webinars. RSTP is committed to building the capacity of the diverse sponsoring community.

How is RSTP structured? How do you work?

CCS is under contract with the Government of Canada to deliver RSTP services to sponsors across the country. Services are delivered by staff located in CCS's head office in Toronto, Ontario, and by a network of RSTP Trainers located in six additional cities across the country (Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, and Halifax).

RSTP delivers training in the form of workshops, information sessions, webinars, online e-courses, and through hosting an annual national Sponsorship Agreement Holder conference that brings in subject experts to address ongoing and emerging issues related to the sponsorship of refugees.

All RSTP produced materials are available through the program website while new information and program updates are also circulated via group emails and bi-weekly bulletins. A great deal of sponsor support and problem solving is done over telephone and via email exchanges.

How is RSTP involved in supporting refugees? Who does RSTP support?

RSTP's mandate is to provide support and information to the sponsorship groups in the PSR program who are then best able to support the refugees to resettle into their new life in Canada.

This includes ensuring that sponsors understand the requirements of the PSR program, their responsibilities and the level of commitment required, to assist them to prepare successful sponsorship applications, and to guide them through the process. RSTP training and materials also place a great deal of emphasis on the post-arrival issues that refugees may present, and works with sponsors to ensure they have the knowledge and resources needed to successfully settle their sponsored refugees. The training topics include managing expectations, the ethical considerations in sponsorship, conflict resolution, understanding sponsorship disputes and breakdowns, handling secondary migration, planning for the end of sponsorship, and other important post-arrival matters such as mental health and domestic violence issues.

The RSTP website has a section specifically for refugees with information on understanding their rights and responsibilities and those of their sponsors, understanding the sponsorship process, and what options are available to them should they be in conflict with their sponsors. In addition, RSTP staff respond to many phone and email enquiries from refugees seeking information and support relative to their individual circumstances. However, it is primarily through supporting the sponsoring groups that RSTP indirectly supports the refugees.

What types of training do sponsors need?

The training needs of sponsoring groups are often as varied as the groups themselves. The new sponsoring groups will need more training on the PSR program, the sponsorship process, refugee eligibility, sponsor responsibilities, and completing the required application forms. More experienced groups may need training on recent changes to the PSR program or on the more complex post-arrival issues. We continue to provide updated information and training on issues of case assessment and country of origin research and connecting sponsors with local settlement resources.

What is RSTP's relationship with the Government of Canada?

CCS has a contract with the Government of Canada, through the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), to deliver RSTP services. The details of the services and supports to be developed and delivered, and the funding allocated to these tasks are spelled out in the contract. In addition, RSTP works very closely with IRCC to ensure that sponsors have the most up-to-date information on changes and developments in the PSR program. With respect to the BVOR program, RSTP works closely with IRCC's Matching Centre by receiving profiles of refugees to be matched, promotion of refugee profiles, tracking of matched cases, following up with interested sponsors and support groups involved in the sponsorship of BVOR cases.

What is the best part of your sponsorship experience?

Through our work of sharing and providing information, delivering training, and supporting sponsoring groups, RSTP contributes to resettling refugees. By offering our knowledge and guidance to private sponsors, we enable them to successfully sponsor and settle refugees. Sponsorship is about saving the lives of refugees, and offering them protection and opportunities to live in a safe and peaceful country and enjoy their rights! RSTP is proud to contribute to this noble cause.

FURTHER READING

- 🌐 RSTP, "Handbook for Sponsoring Groups"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/hand-book-for-sponsoring-groups/>

- 🌐 RSTP, "Training"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/training/>

- 🌐 RSTP, "Information Sheets"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/information-sheets-2/>

- 🌐 RSTP, "Self Assessment Tool for Sponsors"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Self-Assessment-Tool-for-Sponsors.pdf>

- 🌐 RSTP, "Brochures and Booklets"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/rstp-brochures-booklets/>

- 🌐 RSTP, "Video Library"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/>

3.1 ORGANIZING SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT HOLDERS IN CANADA

Location: Winnipeg, Manitoba; National

Name of Sponsoring Group: Sponsorship Agreement Holders Association; Mennonite Central Committee

Type of Sponsoring Group: Association of Sponsorship Agreement Holders in Canada

Website: <http://www.sahassociation.com/>

Interviewee: Brian Dyck



SPONSOR INTERVIEW

What are Sponsorship Agreement Holders?

Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) are organizations that have an agreement with the government to facilitate refugee sponsorship. Usually they work with Constituent Groups (CGs) that animate the settlement.

When were SAHs first formed and how?

The first SAH was Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in April 1979, but it was followed within weeks by a number of other groups. In early 1979, MCC representatives sat down with staff from Employment and Immigration Canada to negotiate the agreement. The goal was to work out responsibilities that SAHs would take in terms of oversight and monitoring. This allowed the government to handle a higher volume of sponsorship applications.

How do SAHs across the country work together?

SAHs have an Association that has existed since 2011. SAHs also connect through an email list for information and advice. The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program provides some connections with groups. Finally, in some regions, SAHs periodically meet to share experiences, information, and best practices.

How are individual SAHs structured?

There are two types of SAHs: national and local. However, these two groups of SAHs are not defined anywhere in the sponsorship agreement with the Government of Canada. The national SAHs are typically religious denominations. They support sponsorships in a variety of regions from a central office through their CGs. In some cases, they have regional staff or volunteers to support the resettlement locally. Local SAHs typically work with CGs as well. The SAH provides an oversight and support function and the CG does the hands-on settlement work.

What is the SAH Association?

The SAH Association is an organization that SAHs may join. Its role is to represent the interests of SAHs and support them in relating to the Government of Canada. It also sometimes speaks on behalf of SAHs in the media and tries to support networking and training.

How and why was the SAH Association formed?

The SAH Association was officially formed in May 2011. There was talk for years about forming an association and there was a loose organization structure that met with the immigration department. It was able to form because the government provided support for gathering to discuss the development of an association, and because the government provides ongoing administrative support through the SAH Secretariat.

How does the SAH Association work?

The Association elects a council of eight every year. Each Councilor is elected to a two-year term. There is an annual general meeting (AGM) associated with an annual training event. Between the AGMs, Council surveys and consults members on specific issues. It also monitors the SAH email list for issues of concern.

What is the SAH Association's relationship with the Government of Canada?

The SAH Council is part of the "NGO-Government Committee." This committee is co-chaired by the Director of the Refugee Affairs Branch of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the Chair of the SAH Council. The committee meets via phone about once a month and face-to-face two-to-three times a year. The Association is also supported by the SAH Secretariat which is funded by the government through a contribution agreement.

What is the best part of your sponsorship experience?

I think one of the most rewarding parts for me is helping groups think through the process of being involved in refugee resettlement.