

Global Refugee
Sponsorship Initiative

AT A GLANCE



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**We help governments
and communities
create opportunities
for citizens to directly
support refugees.**

WHAT IS THE GLOBAL REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP INITIATIVE (GRSI)?

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) encourages and supports the creation of new community sponsorship programs around the world. In such programs, citizens form groups and commit to providing integration, emotional, and financial support for a designated sponsorship period (usually one year) to help refugees adjust to life in a new country. Through community sponsorship, GRSI aims to:

- **Increase and improve overall refugee resettlement** by engaging private citizens, community groups, and businesses in resettlement efforts;
- **Strengthen local host communities** that come together to welcome newcomers; and
- **Improve the narrative** about refugees and other newcomers.

WHY DOES COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP MATTER?

Millions of refugees worldwide are seeking a permanent protection solution, but resettlement remains a rare option. Less than 1% of the world's refugees are likely to benefit from resettlement under existing programs. By mobilizing and empowering citizens, community sponsorship has the potential to increase the availability of resettlement as a protection option for more refugees around the world. Community sponsorship engages local communities in providing emotional, financial, and integration support to help refugees adjust to life and succeed in a new country.

GRSI'S FOUR ACTIVITY AREAS

1

TRAINING AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

Sharing Canada's experience in resettling more than 300,000 refugees through private sponsorship programs, developing a guidebook on community sponsorship, and supporting government and community actors in developing their own community sponsorship programs.

2

CHAMPIONING COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Identifying and working with champions in other countries willing to promote community sponsorship.

3

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Providing technical and strategic services in interested jurisdictions.

4

CAPACITY BUILDING

Assisting to build capacity for new community-based sponsorship programs, including by stewarding unique local-level partnerships and connecting new and experienced sponsoring groups.

Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative

Want to know more? Visit us at:
refugeesponsorship.org

“I know people say,
‘what you’re doing
is a drop in the ocean’—
but then, the ocean
is made up of drops”

OLWEN THOMAS

UK Sponsor

OUR PARTNERS:



uOttawa



UNHCR
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FACT SHEET



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**6 Facts About
Community Sponsorship
of Refugees**

6 FACTS ABOUT COMMUNITY

1

Resettlement is a rare option.

Tens of millions of refugees worldwide are seeking a permanent protection solution, but fewer than 1% of them are likely to benefit from resettlement under existing programs.

2

Community sponsorship is a pathway to resettlement.

In community sponsorship, private citizens form groups and commit to providing integration, emotional, and financial support for a designated sponsorship period (usually one year) to help refugees adjust to life in a new country.

3

Community sponsorship is a whole-of-society approach.

Government, civil society, community groups, individual citizens, and the private sector each have an important role to play to ensure successful resettlement outcomes for refugees.

7 SPONSORSHIP

4

Canada has resettled more than 300,000 refugees since its community sponsorship program began in 1979.

The UK, Argentina, Ireland, and New Zealand are also developing community sponsorship programs.

5

Community sponsorship creates lasting bonds between newcomers and their neighbors and local authorities.

Sponsorship strengthens communities and builds awareness of broader refugee-related issues.

6

Community sponsorship can increase resettlement spots.

By enabling citizens to engage in resettlement efforts, community sponsorship adds to government resettlement programs and increases a country's overall capacity. Community sponsorship can also improve the quality of integration for refugees as a result of the personalized support and networks sponsors can provide.

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“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”

LISA HÉBERT

Canadian Sponsor

OUR PARTNERS:



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GUIDEBOOK



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**Community Sponsorship
of Refugees
Guidebook and
Planning Tools**

WHAT IS THE GUIDEBOOK?

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) Guidebook on the Building Blocks of Community Sponsorship is a tool designed to help government officials, civil society organizations, and community members understand community sponsorship and assist those designing new sponsorship programs in their own countries.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Guidebook contains both operational considerations and overarching policy questions and principles that might impact on program design and implementation. The Guidebook identifies and organizes an expanding series of questions that actors should ask themselves when designing their programs. Each question is linked to a page explaining how Canada has chosen to answer that question in its policies and program design.

LAYER 1: THE MODULES

REFUGEES: FROM ELIGIBILITY TO ARRIVAL	 SPONSORS: FROM MOBILIZATION TO ENGAGEMENT
SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION	REFUGEE-SPONSOR RELATIONSHIP

LAYER 2: THE BIG QUESTIONS

SPONSORS: FROM MOBILIZATION TO ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER...

How will you mobilize private actors to support refugee resettlement?

 **Who will be eligible to sponsor and what will their relationship to government be?**

How will you ensure sponsors are aware of their responsibilities?

What steps will sponsors need to take to prepare for the arrival of refugees?

Are there any options other than sponsorship for communities to support refugees?

How will you screen sponsors?

What training and resources will be needed for sponsors prior to and after refugees arrive?

LAYER 3: KEY CONSIDERATIONS

WHO WILL BE ELIGIBLE TO SPONSOR AND WHAT WILL THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO GOVERNMENT BE?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER...

How are sponsors matched to refugees?

How many members are required in a sponsoring group?

What are the criteria regarding the place of residence of group members vis-à-vis the intended place of residence of the resettled refugees?



What are the types of eligible sponsoring groups?

What is the date on which the sponsoring group's responsibilities take effect?

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

What is the requisite financial capacity of the sponsoring group members, individually and collectively, and how is their financial capacity determined?

What makes a sponsoring group or individual ineligible to become a sponsor?

LAYER 4: HOW CANADA DOES IT – SUMMARY

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF ELIGIBLE SPONSORING GROUPS?

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 integration support to sponsored refugees during their first 12 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.

THERE'S MUCH MORE!

Each Canadian example page provides further in-depth information on every consideration, and a list of resources, giving readers the option to dig even deeper into a particular topic. The Guidebook also highlights the real-life experiences of several Canadian sponsors through a series of case studies.

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IS THERE ONLY ONE WAY TO DO COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP?

The Guidebook demonstrates 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.

Building on the information and insights in the Guidebook, GRSI can help stakeholders in other countries adapt the Canadian experience of community sponsorship to their own contexts.

WHERE CAN I FIND IT?

The Guidebook is available in **English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese** on GRSI's website: refugeesponsorship.org/guidebook

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