

Global Refugee
Sponsorship Initiative

Building Blocks of Community Sponsorship

*Guidebook and Planning Tools based on Canada's
model and emerging programs around the world*

Updated 2022



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Preface: 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 program 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 to ensure those with lived refugee experience meaningfully engage in program design and evaluation?

How your program will encourage volunteerism and build communities?

How you will ensure your community sponsorship program will remain accountable?

2. INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Have you considered...

The broader international context, including global calls and pledges?

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?

What resources and partnerships are required to process community sponsored refugees? How does overseas processing by UNHCR work?

What information and resources will be provided to refugees prior to their arrival in their resettlement country?

How will sponsors and refugees make contact pre-arrival?

How you will identify sponsorship-eligible refugees?

How will refugees be screened?

How will refugees be transported, and destinations chosen?

B. SPONSORS: FROM MOBILIZATION TO ENGAGEMENT

Have you considered...

How you will mobilize private actors to support refugee resettlement?

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

How you will screen sponsors?

What sponsors' responsibilities will be, and 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...

Who will cover the varying costs of settlement and integration?

What legal status will the sponsored refugees have upon arrival?

What types of post-arrival supports will be needed beyond those provided by sponsors?

How will cultural orientation be treated?

How will sponsors address refugees' settlement needs in alignment with settlement service providers?

How will refugees receive timely and relevant referrals as needed to community-based organizations with expertise in addressing gender-based violence, LGBTI supports, and services for refugees with a disability?

What arrangements need to be made for housing?

What supports need to be put in place for job search and training?

The educational needs of refugees?

How refugees will access language training?

How refugees will access physical, mental, and dental health services?

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. INTRODUCTION AND FOUNDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

1.A USING THIS GUIDEBOOK

This Guidebook was created to help public servants, civil society organizations, and community members research and design community sponsorship programs in their countries. It divides a program model into 'building blocks', based largely on Canada's inaugural Private Sponsorship of Refugees program. It is also based on the experiences of many other countries with community sponsorship programs that have emerged in recent years.

These building blocks represent the components of community sponsorship that governments, community organizations, and sponsors should consider when developing their own programs. While Canada's program is a long-standing and successful program, it cannot be re-created in every country. Programs from around the world provide insights into various ways community sponsorship programs can be approached. This Guidebook therefore provides insights from a deep dive into the mechanics of Canada's program, complemented by a number of examples from other countries.

The Guidebook was originally designed in 2017, prior to the emergence of new community sponsorship programs now being implemented in 2022. The Guidebook thus retains focus on Canada's program, while situating it alongside other approaches.

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) is a partnership between the Government of Canada, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Giustra Foundation, the Open Society Foundations, the Shapiro Foundation, and the University of Ottawa Refugee Hub. The GRSI works to encourage and support the adoption and expansion of community sponsorship programs around the world. The GRSI began by sharing Canada's history, experience, and leadership in community sponsorship, by supporting countries in designing new programs that meet their unique needs and by sharing innovations emerging in community sponsorship around the world. In partnership with local community leaders and government policy makers, the GRSI aims to: increase refugee resettlement opportunities and improve refugee integration outcomes by engaging governments, community groups, individuals, philanthropists, and businesses in resettlement efforts; strengthen local host communities that come together to welcome newcomers; and promote welcoming and inclusive societies and improve the narrative about refugees and other newcomers.

Community sponsorship originated in Canada in 1979 as a response to refugees fleeing Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, and has now inspired program growth worldwide. As of 2022, the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative is actively engaged in nearly 20 countries currently implementing, designing, or exploring new programs across four continents. These include Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Portugal, Sweden, Finland, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, and Brazil. The European Union has included community sponsorship as a core component of its future refugee protection policy.

The overall aim of this Guidebook is to encourage and support local actors as they design a model tailored to their own context. Each community sponsorship program relayed here has powerful tools that enable robust citizen engagement in refugee resettlement. The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative hopes that this Guidebook will support local actors seeking to learn more about community sponsorship, demonstrate the emerging global leadership in community sponsorship, and offer concrete guidance to those working to design 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 Are the Results of Community Sponsorship Programs Evaluated?

B.5 Looking at New Zealand

B.1 COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP IN BRIEF

“Community sponsorship” is a term that is used globally, including in Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative materials. It describes programs that empower groups of individuals to commit to support the initial reception and integration of refugees arriving in their communities through resettlement and complementary pathways. Organizations or citizen groups commit to providing support (such as emotional, financial, and practical) for a designated period to help refugees adjust to life in a new country. In many countries, this is contextualized locally with a unique term (for example, “Private Sponsorship” in Canada).

Community sponsorship has been recognized as a critical tool for growing and improving refugee protection opportunities in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the Global Compact on Refugees, Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways, and the European Union Pact on Migration and Asylum.

So, what exactly is community sponsorship, and why consider this program model?

The essence of community sponsorship programs is that they allow citizens and permanent residents to directly engage in refugee resettlement efforts to find durable solutions for refugees via resettlement and complementary pathways (third country solutions). Individuals can form groups to become sponsors who commit to providing support (such as financial, emotional and practical) to help newly arrived refugees integrate into life in a new country. Involving communities in resettlement efforts leads to positive integration outcomes for admitted refugees. Community sponsors provide individualized social and emotional support that is critical to making newcomers feel welcome and at home and engage more quickly in various sectors of society.

Community sponsorship is an important tool for advancing the principle of additionality, because the number of refugees at risk benefitting from resettlement can be significantly enhanced when community sponsorship programs are implemented in close collaboration with UNHCR to complement government resettlement programs.

Community sponsorship is also 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. 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 sponsorship programs.

The expanded opportunity for protection presented by the creation and growth of community sponsorship programs is a strong driver for this work. Millions of refugees worldwide are seeking protection solutions, 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 and complementary pathways as protection options for more refugees around the world, providing spaces that are in addition to those that states could offer on their own.

While community sponsorship is a term used globally, Canada has used the term Private Sponsorship to describe its community sponsorship of refugees program. Throughout the Guidebook, Private Sponsorship refers specifically to Canada’s Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program, while community sponsorship remains the term used to describe this catchment of programs, globally.

As of 2022, Canada admitted over 350,000 refugees through its Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program since it was introduced in 1979, and newer programs included in this Guidebook have together admitted hundreds of refugees over a short three- to five- year period. This means that many communities around the world have benefited from coming together to welcome refugees through community sponsorship.

Studies and evaluations of community sponsorship programs around the world also show that community sponsorship tends to have a positive impact on refugee integration. This is addressed in more detail later in this Guidebook.

RESOURCES

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<https://www.unhcr.org/new-york-declaration-for-refugees-and-migrants.html>

UNHCR, "Global Compact on Refugees"

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European Commission, "New Pact on Migration"

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B.2 CANADA'S REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM

While the hope is that the Canadian example inspires other actors to build new community sponsorship models, new programs do not need to replicate what Canada has done and should be tailored to their own context. Examples from Australia, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Spain, and the UK relayed throughout this Guidebook provide useful examples of alternative approaches to various aspects of community sponsorship program design.

Because this Guidebook takes a highly in-depth approach to Canada's program, a brief overview of how Canada's refugee resettlement program works is below.

Canada's humanitarian tradition and international obligations are supported by welcoming refugees and other people in need of protection to the country.

Resettlement is how Canada primarily selects refugees abroad and supports their health, safety, and security as they settle in Canada (labour-mobility based complementary pathways have also been introduced, but they are not covered in this Guidebook).

There are three central categories of refugees eligible for resettlement to Canada:

- **Government-Assisted Refugees:** Refugees referred for resettlement to Canada by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or another designated referral agency, based on the refugees' protection needs. Refugees admitted under this program are entirely supported by the Government of Canada during their first 12 months in Canada;
- **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.
- **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 12 months in Canada.
- **Blended Visa Office-Referral 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.

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 amid 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, transgender, 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 and BVOR program as a mechanism to provide safety to Syrians and Iraqis who were fleeing from violence and civil instability in their countries. In 18 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. Announced in 2021, the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program will also be a part of Canada's humanitarian program for Afghan nationals in need of resettlement.

Since its creation, the PSR program (and later the BVOR program, since 2013) has been used to resettle over 350,000 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.

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IRCC, Humanitarian program for Afghan nationals in need of resettlement
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<http://policyoptions.irpp.org/fr/magazines/mai-2016/lessons-learned-from-the-indochinese-and-syrian-refugee-movements/>

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B.4 HOW ARE THE RESULTS OF COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMS EVALUATED?

Clearly establishing the purpose, objectives, and measures of a community sponsorship program at its outset enables evaluation of its success, allowing policymakers and communities to orient program advancement toward sustainability.

This Guidebook provides a light overview of monitoring and evaluation in the community sponsorship context. The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative invites you to turn to products and tools specifically dedicated to monitoring and evaluation for more in-depth explorations of these topics, such as our Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit, published on our website in 2022.

What is Evaluation?

Evaluation is the process of assessing a program or initiative, whether completed or ongoing, in order to determine how well the project under evaluation met its objectives.

Evaluations can be undertaken by the body implementing the program, or policymakers and community leaders can also consider engaging researchers and commissioning research to evaluate results.

What is Monitoring?

Monitoring is the process of collecting and analyzing information on a continuous basis in order to inform ongoing assessment of a project or program's performance.

The Importance of Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks for Community Sponsorship

Monitoring and evaluation both play a key role in program integrity. Regular post-arrival contact with both newcomers and sponsors ensures that follow-ups and monitoring can be done with a view to maintaining strong and effective programs and resolving potential issues as they arise. In essence, ensuring a proper measurement framework is in place at the outset of launching sponsorship programs can help to support successful integration and other policy objectives, and also aids with wider research purposes. Evaluation is a critical component of refugee sponsorship programs, and building evaluation mechanisms right into the initial program design is an important means to ensure program success.

Guiding Principles of Monitoring and Evaluation for Community Sponsorship Programs

Monitoring and evaluation frameworks should be developed and implemented with a view to engaging sponsored newcomers in a meaningful way in order to take into consideration their diversity of experiences and to inform program assessment. In addition, successful monitoring and evaluation frameworks for community sponsorship programs should also seek to capture the experiences of sponsors, mentors, and service providers.

Furthermore, the inclusion and meaningful engagement of those with lived refugee experiences (i.e. in knowledge exchange, program design, and communications about community sponsorship) must itself be underpinned by key principles of continuous consultation and evaluation.

Stages of Monitoring and Evaluation

Each juncture of the community sponsorship program will need to be evaluated for both the sponsors and refugees: pre-arrival, during the sponsorship phase, and after the sponsorship is concluded.

Identifying clear program objectives, indicators of success, and methods for incorporating information gained through monitoring and evaluation are a few aspects to consider. Countries such as New Zealand and Spain, who have recently evaluated their community sponsorship pilots, provide global leadership through their program monitoring and evaluation initiatives. Their evaluation approaches and findings provide important insights for those designing or improving community sponsorship programs around the world. Their approaches are provided in detail later in this Guidebook.

In Canada, monitoring and evaluation are multifaceted. Here, evaluation 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.

- At regular intervals (typically every five years), Canada conducts an evaluation of its resettlement programs, including 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 also conducts an annual survey to compare integration outcomes of newcomers who access federally-funded settlement services and those who do not, across all immigration streams.
- 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 measurement survey, where SAHs express views on the program and make recommendations to improve the private sponsorship model.
- Canada also uses an internal administrative data system 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 the Blended Visa Office-Referred program, and refugee arrivals through the PSR program.

RESOURCES

The GRSI Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit is available on the [GRSI Website](#). For the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, this Toolkit is the principal guiding document for community sponsorship monitoring and evaluation, much like this Guidebook is for how Canada and others do community sponsorship overall.

<https://refugeesponsorship.org/wp-content/uploads/ME-Toolkit-Slide-Deck.pdf>

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

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

IRCC, "Evaluation of the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program" from 2016 - 2020

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Centre for Community-Based Research (CCBR)

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B.5 LOOKING AT NEW ZEALAND

Furthermore, New Zealand's experience in community sponsorship program evaluation provides a strong example for new and existing community sponsorship programs to learn from.

Community Organization Refugee Sponsorship Category, New Zealand

At the time of writing (early 2022), New Zealand is in the process of implementing a community sponsorship pilot, providing an alternative pathway to the Quota Refugee Category for 150 refugees over three years. This pilot builds on the first pilot, known as the Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) Category, that was approved by the New Zealand Government in 2016. The CORS pilot was an alternative form of admission for up to 25 refugees. In 2017/18 the CORS pilot saw the successful selection of four community organization sponsors and six refugee families comprising 24 people.

About three months after the CORS sponsored refugees arrived, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment undertook a process evaluation of the CORS pilot to inform decisions on any future intakes under the CORS Category.

Based on interviews and administrative data, the evaluation assessed how well the CORS pilot had been implemented, what early outputs had been achieved and what improvements could be made if it were rolled out further. It did not draw any conclusions about the success of the pilot in terms of settlement outcomes and labour market integration.

The evaluation concluded that:

- The CORS had successfully brought communities together to support refugees.
- Sponsored refugees were doing well at the time of the evaluation, but it was early days and employment was going to be a challenge.
- Different models evolved to support sponsored refugees, and potential for community organizations to partner with others was identified.
- Some areas for improvement around communication and the selection process were noted.
- There were mixed perspectives about the refugee selection criteria whereby Principal applicants were required to demonstrate English language ability, meet minimum work experience or qualifications and be aged 18 to 45.
- Sponsors indicated there was wider interest within communities to expand the CORS and that there was capability and capacity to sponsor a greater number of refugees with the right support in place.
- Aspects of the CORS pilot needed to be reviewed if the number of sponsored refugees was to increase, including the model, the nomination and selection process, and ways to deliver a reception program.

For more information see the report here - [Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category Pilot: Process evaluation \[PDF, 1.1 MB\]](#)

The feedback from the pilot's evaluation was essential in developing the extension of the category. Some of the findings considered were:

- the need to build capability and capacity of community organizations to engage in refugee sponsorship;
- limited access to information and support throughout the sponsorship journey; and,
- lack of information about the program in the wider community.

Additionally, reports completed by previous sponsors¹ and key stakeholders² recommended engagement with a broader range of stakeholders, establishing proactive partnerships (especially with Māori tangata whenua), and additional training and ongoing support for sponsors.

The findings confirmed the need to include a co-design component as part of the extended pilot project. The aim of the co-design was to work collectively with interested parties and develop a model to enable 'promotion' of community sponsorship, build capability and capacity in community sponsorship organizations, create robust information sharing channels between parties, and support the overall wellbeing and safety of sponsored refugees.

As part of the co-design process, the evaluation acted as a starting point for the design group. Thirty-eight community representatives participated in both information sessions and co-design workshops. This was a four-month process, which included participation from previous sponsors, former refugees, academics and iwi representatives.

New Zealand's Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recognises the importance of working in partnership with community organizations, key stakeholders and Māori tangata whenua in developing a sustainable model to support the extension of the Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment is currently drafting an Evaluation Framework for the Extended Refugee Sponsorship pilot that will include feedback loops to inform the ongoing design of the extended pilot in the first 18 months of implementation. An outcomes evaluation will be undertaken two years after the first sponsored refugees arrive in New Zealand and it will examine outcomes for sponsored refugees, sponsors and the wider community.

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1.C SETTING THE FOUNDATION

C.1 Overarching Principles and Policies

C.2 Engaging Meaningful Refugee Participation

C.1 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:** Policymakers need to consider how protection is central to their community sponsorship of refugees program. Programs should be designed and implemented in such a way that the rights of refugees and their international protection needs are safeguarded. There are several guiding considerations:
 1. The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention) is a comprehensive codification of refugee rights at the international level. This establishes the status of refugees, sets the minimum standards of the treatment of refugees, including the basic rights to which refugees are entitled. It is a rights-based instrument, underpinned by many fundamental principles (e.g. non-discrimination). Refugees should be treated equally and have a fair prospect to access third country solutions irrespective of their age, gender and other characteristics. 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.
 2. The Refugee Convention and human rights treaties recognize that refugees are at risk of violence and persecution and that their safety and well-being should be prioritized over other criteria. Canada's refugee program, enshrined in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, is "in the first instance about saving lives and offering protection to the displaced and persecuted".
- **DURABLE SOLUTIONS:** Resettlement is one of three durable solutions, along with voluntary repatriation and local integration. Resettlement is an invaluable tool to provide international protection to refugees whose life, liberty, safety, health, or other fundamental human rights are at risk in the country where they initially sought refuge. However, according to UNHCR, there are currently only resettlement places available for less than one percent of the more than twenty-five million refugees worldwide. These places are prioritized for those at highest risk of violence, discrimination, and persecution - e.g. children separated from their families, women experiencing violence and gender inequality, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, 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. Policymakers need to carefully consider the legal status provided to refugees once they are admitted 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 (detailed later in this Guidebook).
- **SAFEGUARDS:** In order to ensure that the necessary safeguards are in place, it is important that community sponsorship programs are underpinned by a safety net of government support and rights consistent with international protection standards and harmonized with that provided to refugees admitted for resettlement or complementary pathways through government programs. Community sponsorship programs should be designed with clearly defined responsibilities of the sponsor and the government. In order to do so, design features - such as the duration of sponsorship, financial responsibilities, responsibility for accommodation and housing, and the transition at the end of the sponsorship period - need to be considered carefully. While sponsors have important responsibilities, states bear ultimate responsibility for the protection and integration of refugees. Ensuring that a safety net exists for sponsored refugees when the sponsorship ends or in the event the sponsor is unable or no longer willing to fulfil the responsibilities for whatever reason is critical.

- **INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY SHARING:** The Refugee Convention establishes the juridical status of refugees and sets the minimum standards of treatment of refugees. It acknowledges that solutions to refugee matters cannot be achieved without international cooperation. Calls for responsibility-sharing were renewed through the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in 2016 and, subsequently, in the Global Compact on Refugees in 2018. The Global Compact on Refugees calls for a multi-stakeholder approach in achieving its four objectives to: i) ease pressures on host countries; ii) enhance refugee self-reliance, iii) expand access to third-country solutions; and iv) support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity. The goal of the Global Compact on Refugees is to move away from short-term and largely insufficient refugee responses towards comprehensive responses enabled by more predictable and sustainable support. The States Network on Community Sponsorship, co-chaired by Canada and the United Kingdom, is a model approach that allows for collective promotion and support of community sponsorship programs for refugees and aligns with the Compact's call for state-to-state engagement to expand third country solutions with the support of champion states. As acknowledged by the Global Compact on Refugees, resettlement is a tangible mechanism for burden- and responsibility-sharing and a demonstration of solidarity, allowing States to help share each other's burdens and reduce the impact of large refugee situations in host countries. Community sponsorship of refugees presents an opportunity to participate in international responsibility sharing on refugee issues at a local level.
- **ADDITIONALITY/INCREASING RESETTLEMENT PLACES:** The number of refugees in need of resettlement greatly surpasses national and regional global quotas. It is therefore important that community sponsorship programs are created in addition to existing government resettlement programs. The additionality principle can be described in several ways. First, 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 sponsors to fill government resettlement places, rather than adding to places already committed to by government, may present risks, including an overall decline in global resettlement capacity at a time of unprecedented and urgent need. Second, adding resettlement places globally means 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 refugees at risk benefitting from resettlement can be significantly enhanced when community sponsorship programs are implemented in close collaboration with UNHCR to complement government resettlement programs.
- **FAMILY REUNIFICATION:** A fundamental principle of refugee protection is the unity of the family, deriving directly from the universally recognized right to family life. Refugees resettle and integrate faster if they do not have to worry about family members that they leave 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 at-risk refugees for resettlement. This tension could be alleviated by offering alternative options for family reunification. 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 could 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 later sections of the Guidebook.
- **REFUGEE PARTICIPATION:** As policymakers and communities develop community sponsorship programs, creating space for those with lived refugee and sponsorship experience to meaningfully engage in program design and evaluation is important to consider from the outset. Even in contexts where community sponsorship of refugees programs do not yet exist, there are refugee newcomers with lived refugee experience who have already integrated into the local context who can provide valuable information on their settlement needs, integration experience, and any other contextual factors along the continuum of displacement to integration.

- **VOLUNTEERISM/COMMUNITY BUILDING:** Community sponsorship can create 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.

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UNHCR, Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

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<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs12134-003-1036-9?LI=true>

C.2 ENGAGING MEANINGFUL REFUGEE PARTICIPATION

As policymakers and communities develop community sponsorship programs, it is important to consider how those with lived refugee experience (also referred to as refugees throughout the document) can meaningfully participate in program design and evaluation. Given that refugee newcomers are the most directly impacted by sponsorship programs, it may be instructive to include their voices in the spaces where decisions are being made about them. Refugees and refugee-led organizations are key leaders in advancing and sustaining community sponsorship programs, and their insights may enhance program design and provide information about settlement needs, integration experiences, and the sponsorship journey.

"Refugee participation can bring knowledge, experience and perspectives of refugees more fully into policy formulations and decision making stages...Which could potentially result in more effective policy and program; in more innovative, sustainable and impactful outcomes."

- Rez Gardi (co-founder of R-SEAT), Capstone Symposium of the Research Colloquium on Refugee Sponsorship

As the value of refugee participation is increasingly being recognized, experts are urging state and civil society actors to take concrete action to advance refugee participation and recognize the ongoing leadership of refugees and refugee-led organizations.

Additional resources about building meaningful refugee participation can be found [here](#).

While refugee participation provides invaluable insights into community sponsorship programs and acknowledges refugees as key stakeholders and leaders within sponsorship programs, there is no one size fits all approach. The guidance provided here is intended to begin reflection and conversation around the importance of refugee participation. Facilitating meaningful participation will look different in every context but may contribute to the long-term success and sustainability of programs.

RESOURCES

Global Refugee-Led Network, "Meaningful Refugee Participation as Transformative Leadership: Guidelines for Concrete Actions"

https://www.asylumaccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Meaningful-Refugee-Participation-Guidelines_Web.pdf

SHARE Network, "10 Key Principles of Refugee & Migrant Participation"

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61701919c9cd9200cd8e6ccc/t/6217417cf12e6805ac9a3e8b/1645691260575/SHARE+Network+10+Key+Principles+Participation+Integration.pdf>

RESET, "Experts by Experience Project"

<https://resetuk.org/news-and-campaigns/news/how-we-re-learning-from-experts-by-experience>

Refugees Seeking Equal Access at the Table, "Resources"

<https://refugeesseat.org/our-resources/>

The Refugee Advisory Network of Canada, "Mandate"

<https://www.rancanada.ca/home>

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. Furthermore, the laws, regulations, policies and procedures within countries exist within an important international context.

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

CANADA'S CONTEXT AND PLEDGES

International Context

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.

Canada is also a strong supporter of the Global Compact on Refugees (the Compact), which calls for more equitable responsibility-sharing, and the Compact's Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways (the Three-Year Strategy). Developed in collaboration with over 90 stakeholders, the Three-Year Strategy articulates three goals to serve the vision that by the end of 2028, three million refugees benefit from effective protection and solutions: to grow resettlement; to advance complementary pathways; and to build the foundation by promoting welcoming and including societies.

To support the implementation of the Compact and the Three-Year Strategy, Canada made several pledges at the Global Refugee Forum in 2019. Many of these pledges are in support of resettlement and the development of complementary pathways. These pledges are tracked through self-reporting to UNHCR and publicly available on the Pledge & Contributions Dashboard. UNHCR also organizes stocktaking events to facilitate conversations on lessons learned and common challenges.

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 responsible for selecting and processing refugees for resettlement to Canada. Federal law such as Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) regulates right of entry into Canada, and legal status and rights of refugees upon entry. Canadian citizenship is a federal responsibility governed by the Citizenship Act, which defines who is Canadian, and who may become a Canadian citizen. 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 RESETTLEMENT AND 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 designated referral agency. Refugees resettled under this program are entirely supported by the Government of Canada during their first 12 months in Canada;
- **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.
- **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 12 months in Canada.
- **Blended 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.

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.”

Who Can Sponsor?

Canadian laws and regulations 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/territory 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 regulations provide further definitions and clauses outlining the various types of sponsoring groups, including Groups of Five, Community Sponsors, and Sponsorship Agreement Holders (IRPR Reg. 138, R. 152). 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/>

1.E COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP GLOBALLY: THE GERMAN EXAMPLE

COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP IN GERMANY

As noted in the introductory sections, examples of community sponsorship programs that have adapted and innovated alternative approaches to Canada's are integrated throughout this Guidebook. One recently established example is community sponsorship in Germany.

Since May 2019, the German federal government has been piloting a community sponsorship program called "NesT - Neustart im Team/New Start in a Team" to facilitate the additional resettlement of up to 500 most at-risk refugees to Germany with the support of private sponsors.

The pilot program offers various civil society groups (citizens, NGOs, companies, etc.) the opportunity to sponsor individual refugees or refugee families. Different actors from the government and civil society work closely together on NesT.

The goal is not only to offer additional settlement opportunities for the most at-risk refugees, but also to support their integration in Germany through the social support of the sponsors. Furthermore, the personal contact between the refugees and the sponsor group is intended to increase the acceptance of refugees and society's willingness to take them in.

Refugees sponsored through the NesT pilot program are drawn from the pool of UNHCR-referred candidates for resettlement from one of five countries of first asylum, currently: Egypt, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon and Niger (through the UNHCR evacuation mechanism from Libya). This means they have been assessed by UNHCR to be most at-risk.

Criteria used in this assessment include the following (source: [UNHCR's published resources](#)):

- Those facing a present risk in country of first asylum, e.g. imprisonment, refoulement, human trafficking, domestic violence, or persecution due to LGBTQI+ identity
- Women and girls at particular risk
- Victims of torture and violence

Before submitting an application, a potential sponsoring group (referred to in Germany as a "Mentoring-Gruppe" or "Mentoring Group") receives training to prepare them for the duties that they will be expected to undertake, if approved to sponsor. Once the application of a sponsoring group (Mentoring-Gruppe) has been approved, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) matches them with an individual refugee or refugee family from the resettlement pool.

In this matching process, BAMF considers among other things the size and specification of the accommodation which the sponsors have provided (e.g. disabled access), as well as relevant information about the sponsors such as languages spoken.

More detailed information is available in the (German-language) handbook for sponsors: <https://www.neustartimteam.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Leitfaden-fuer-MentorenInnen-1911.pdf>

Read on to learn how Canada approaches eligibility and matching.

2. HOW COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP WORKS IN ACTION

2.A REFUGEES: FROM ELIGIBILITY TO ARRIVAL

ACTORS MAY CONSIDER:

- 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?
- iii.** What is the sponsor's role in identifying refugees for resettlement?
- iv.** How do various processing actors communicate their actions and decisions?
- v.** What is the role of the host country in processing refugees for sponsorship/resettlement?
- vi.** What policies govern data-sharing between actors?

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:

- i. What criteria must applicants 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. Must individuals in a family independently meet the eligibility criteria for refugee resettlement or is status derivative?

RESOURCES

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

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, “Refugee Resettlement (Operation Instructions and Guidelines).”
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement.html>

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

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada's system has two main steps for determining who is eligible for resettlement 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"- this is detailed in the following segment of this section.

The second is admissibility to Canada. Applicants will undergo a security, criminality, and medical screening to ensure they do not pose a risk to Canadians and Canadian society.

The eligibility decision is normally based on an interview by a Canadian migration 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.

DETAIL

Refugee applicants will qualify for resettlement to Canada if:

- They are members of the Convention Refugee Abroad Class (or members of the Country of Asylum Class (read on in this segment for detail on both).
- Their refugee claim is credible (read on in this segment for more detail).
- They are outside Canada: 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.
- They can demonstrate the ability to establish themselves in Canada: 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 migration officer will determine whether refugee applicants will be able to provide for themselves and their dependents and to not have any impediments to joining the full-time labour force, even if it is at minimum wage. To do so, they 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 migration officer to be in urgent need of protection or in vulnerable circumstances do not need to demonstrate their ability to establish in Canada. Vulnerable here means, in respect of a Convention refugee or a person in similar circumstances, that the person has a greater need of protection than other applicants for protection abroad because of the person's particular circumstances that give rise to a heightened risk to their physical safety or well-being.
- They have no durable solution within a reasonable period of time other than resettlement to Canada: the Canadian migration officer must be satisfied that there is no reasonable prospect, within a reasonable period of time, for refugee applicants to obtain another durable solution.

- They are not inadmissible on medical or security grounds (detail is provided later in this chapter): refugees accepted for resettlement to Canada must not be inadmissible on security, criminality, or medical grounds. 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 public health and safety in Canada. Canada will require refugees to be treated for such conditions before being admitted.
- In exceptional situations, Canada may resettle people who do not meet the criteria above- for instance those still residing in their countries of nationality or habitual residence. Under section 25.2 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Minister may grant exemptions from any of the above criteria by means of public policy. Public policies typically have a narrow and temporally bounded focus, in order to permit the resettlement of a specific group of people who would not otherwise qualify. One example is Canada's recent and ongoing resettlement of Afghans inside and outside Afghanistan who demonstrated an enduring or significant relationship to Canada, and other at-risk Afghan nationals, including: women leaders, human rights defenders, LGBTI individuals, persecuted religious and ethnic minorities, as well as journalists and persons who supported Canadian journalists.

For some sponsorship streams (Group of Five, Community Sponsor - see later in this chapter), refugees must also possess valid proof of refugee status recognition from the UNHCR or their host state in order to qualify for resettlement.

If refugees are not determined to be eligible for resettlement, they will be informed of the reasons under the relevant provisions of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) and their application for permanent residence will be refused. Applicants are always given an opportunity to respond to concerns prior to final decisions being rendered. In Blended Visa Office-Referral (BVOR) programs, refugees have already satisfied eligibility and admissibility criteria by the time a match is made with a private sponsoring group in Canada.

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
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/ref-sponsor.pdf>

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

IRCC, "Terms and definitions related to refugee protection"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/terms-definitions-related-refugee-protection.html>

IRCC, "Determining whether the applicant has the ability to establish in Canada"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/eligibility/ability-establish.html>

(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

A Convention refugee is defined in Canada’s Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (A96) a person who, by reason of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion,

- a. is outside each of their countries of nationality and is unable or, by reason of that fear, unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of each of those countries; or
- b. not having a country of nationality, is outside the country of their former habitual residence and is unable or, by reason of that fear, unwilling to return to that country.

IRCC also provides guidance on the difference between discrimination and persecution. Examples of persecution include a flagrant violation of a basic right, such as denial of a fair and impartial trial, particularly when combined with unduly severe punishment, is usually considered persecution; and a threat to life or freedom.

Section A98 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, also based on the Refugee Convention, excludes from this definition persons who:

- are recognized by the authorities in the country in which they have taken residence as having the same rights and obligations of persons possessing the nationality of that country;
- have committed a crime against peace, a war crime, a crime against humanity, a serious non-political crime outside their country of asylum prior to their admission to that country as a refugee; and
- have been guilty of any acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the U.N.

The [UNHCR Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status](#) and the [UNHCR Resettlement Handbook](#) provide a detailed interpretation of the Convention definition.

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Convention refugees abroad class - Conditions" (Operational Instructions and Guidelines)
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/admissibility/convention.html>

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"
<https://www.unhcr.org/publications/legal/5ddfcdc47/handbook-procedures-criteria-determining-refugee-status-under-1951-convention.html>

UNHCR Resettlement Handbook
<https://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/4a2ccf4c6/unhcr-resettlement-handbook-country-chapters.html>

IRCC, "Resettlement: Assessing credibility"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/admissibility/credibility.html>

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, "Updated version of Interpretation of the Convention Refugee Definition in the Case Law"
<https://irb.gc.ca/en/news/2018/Pages/updated-case-law-paper.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

In addition to Convention Refugees, through the private sponsorship of refugees program, Canada also allows for the resettlement of individuals who have been or are seriously and personally affected by civil war, armed conflict or massive violations of human rights.

DETAIL

The COUNTRY OF ASYLUM CLASS allows for 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, of 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: IRCC relies on UNHCR guidance when deciding to recognize prima facie refugee situations, and Canada has granted refugee status and resettlement to certain populations recognized as refugees on a prima facie basis. Examples include Somali Madhiban refugees in Kenya in 2003-2004, Karen refugees in Thailand in 2006-2008, and Bhutanese refugees in Nepal (2008-2015). For Canada’s more recent Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative in 2015-16, Syrians were assessed by IRCC (and by UNHCR) with a presumption of inclusion, based on Article 1A(2) of the 1951 Convention definition; however, this is not identical to Prima Facie recognition of refugee status.

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)

<https://lawjournal.mcgill.ca/wp-content/uploads/pdf/8290193-hathaway.pdf>

IRCC, "Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative - Looking Into the Future."

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/welcome-syrian-refugees/looking-future.html>

Shauna Labman, "Private Sponsorship: Complementary or Conflicting Interests?" (*Refuge*, 2016)

<http://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/40266/36411>

(iv) 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 admitted 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, each family member must pass security, criminality, and medical checks. If an accompanying family member is found to be inadmissible to Canada (see later in this segment), the entire family will be inadmissible to Canada (some exceptions may apply).

Canadian migration officers may determine that individuals who do not meet the definition of “family members” are nevertheless de facto dependents of the primary refugee applicant based on their economic and emotional dependency, and should be admitted as part of the family unit. However, de facto dependents do not receive derivative status and must be found eligible on their own.

Canada endeavors to resettle entire families concurrently to avoid situations of family separation. However, if a family member is separated, the primary refugee applicant may submit an application for permanent residence for them within one year of the primary applicant’s arrival in Canada through the One Year Window provision. The One Year Window provision facilitates the reunification of non-accompanying family members (spouses and children) with refugees who have been admitted to Canada as members of the Convention refugee abroad class or country of asylum class.

In situations where a minor 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 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.” UNHCR Guidelines on Determining the Best Interests of the Child are linked below for more detail.

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Refugee Resettlement (Operation Instructions and Guidelines)."
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals.html>

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, "One-year window (OYW) of opportunity - All provinces except Quebec"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/dependant/one-year/all.html>

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>

UNHCR, Best Interests Procedure (BIP) Guidelines: Assessing and Determining the Best Interests of the Child, 2021
<https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5c18d7254.pdf>

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

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

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

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- i. What steps are required to process a community sponsored refugee?
- ii. Where is each processing step completed and by whom?
- iii. If working with a referral organization, what requirements must the organization meet?

RESOURCES

IRCC, *Refugee Resettlement (Operation Instructions and Guidelines)*.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals.html>

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

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 Results Report"
<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/documents/pdf/english/corporate/publications-manuals/drr-2020-2021-en.pdf>

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

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

In addition to eligibility requirements covered in the previous segment (assessing the refugee applicant's eligibility to be granted refugee protection in Canada) the other main steps required to process a privately sponsored refugee include:

- Identifying a refugee case;
- Assessing the sponsor's eligibility to sponsor;
- Interviewing and collecting biometric information to establish identity and determine the refugee's eligibility and admissibility to Canada, including medical, criminality, and security screening;
- 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); and
- Notifying sponsors of the refugee(s)' arrival date and time.

This segment will not cover the detailed requirements of these steps (for eligibility, see previous section; for admissibility, see later section). Instead, it addresses the actors involved in each these steps, where they are located, and how they coordinate and communicate.

(ii) WHERE IS EACH PROCESSING STEP COMPLETED AND BY WHOM?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Processing of refugee sponsorship applications occurs both in Canada and overseas, and involves multiple actors.

Important to recall at the outset of reviewing processing step actors and locations is that private sponsoring groups in Canada may identify refugees they would like to sponsor by either specifically naming the refugee or by selecting a refugee from a list supplied by Canada. Those who are specifically named by their sponsors are admitted through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program. In the latter case, the refugee is referred to a Canadian mission overseas by UNHCR or another partner agency, and is selected for resettlement to Canada and put forward for possible matching with private sponsors through either the Blended Visa Office-Referred program or the Joint Assistance Sponsorship program.

DETAIL

IDENTIFICATION OF A REFUGEE CASE may be completed in Canada or overseas. If sponsors already know whom they wish to sponsor (which takes place through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program), identification occurs in Canada. If sponsors seek to find individuals to sponsor (which takes place through the Blended Visa Office Referral or Joint Assistance Sponsorship programs), identification may occur overseas, often through referral by a third-party organization like the 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 Canadian migration office to the refugee applicant. Interviews may be waived at the discretion of the overseas migration officer on a case-by-case basis, where warranted. Refugees' eligibility requirements were covered in detail in the previous segment of this Guidebook.

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 details on admissibility later in this Guidebook.

MEDICAL EXAMS, CRIMINALITY AND SECURITY SCREENINGS: Refugees have their identity and documents verified at all stages of processing by Canadian migration officers, with support from law enforcement and security partners as needed, before they are accepted for resettlement to Canada. 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. Again, details on admissibility are provided later in this Guidebook.

TRAVEL COORDINATION, including arranging travel documentation and all flight logistics is performed at overseas visa and typically in coordination with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) offices and the host state.

NOTIFYING SPONSORS of the refugee(s)' arrival happens both at the overseas migration 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, "Refugee Resettlement (Operation Instructions and Guidelines)."
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals.html>

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, "Resettlement: Travel arrangements"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/depart-abroad/travel.html>

(iii) IF WORKING WITH A REFERRAL ORGANIZATION, WHAT REQUIREMENTS MUST THE ORGANIZATION BE REQUIRED TO MEET?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

While the majority of refugees who are privately sponsored in Canada are identified by their sponsorship group in Canada, as outlined earlier in this segment, sponsors may also be matched with refugees who have been identified by a referral organization.

Canada accepts referrals from UNHCR as well as other referral organizations with whom the government has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

DETAIL

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 MOU itself must, at a minimum, include the geographic area to be served by the organization; the number of referrals that may be made by the organization and the manner of referral; the training of members or employees of the organizations; and, the grounds for suspending or cancelling the MOU.

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

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Evaluation of the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/blended-visa-office-referred-program.html>

IRCC, "Refugee Resettlement (Operation Instructions and Guidelines)"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement.html>

IRCC, "Referrals from the UNHCR and other authorized organizations"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/government-assisted/receipt/high-commissioner.html>

IRCC, "Resettlement: Deciding when to interview"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/admissibility/decide-interview.html>

UNHCR, "Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2022" <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/60d320a64/projected-global-resettlement-needs-2022-pdf.html>

A.3 HOW DOES OVERSEAS PROCESSING BY UNHCR WORK, AND HOW ARE OTHERS ENGAGED?

SCOPE

This Guidebook centres on Canada's model of refugee resettlement through community sponsorship of refugees, and similar models around the world. This section provides an overview of UNHCR's overseas processing for resettlement referrals. There are also other models which use different processing and referral mechanisms.

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, to mitigate the risk of fraud, and to manage expectations of refugees.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- 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?
- iii. What is the sponsor's role in identifying refugees for resettlement?
- iv. How do various processing actors communicate their actions and decisions?
- v. What is the role of the host country in processing refugees for sponsorship/resettlement?
- vi. What policies govern data-sharing between actors?

RESOURCES

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

UNHCR, "Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status and Guidelines on International Protection under the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees"
<https://www.unhcr.org/publications/legal/5ddfcdc47/handbook-procedures-criteria-determining-refugee-status-under-1951-convention.html>

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?

SUMMARY

There are three preconditions for refugees to be submitted for resettlement to a resettlement country 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 based on heightened protection risks in the country of asylum.

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 later in this section).

RESOURCES

[UNHCR, "Resettlement Handbook"
http://www.unhcr.org/46f7c0ee2.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/46f7c0ee2.pdf)

[UNHCR, "Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status and Guidelines on International Protection under the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees"
https://www.unhcr.org/publications/legal/5ddfc47/handbook-procedures-criteria-determining-refugee-status-under-1951-convention.html](https://www.unhcr.org/publications/legal/5ddfc47/handbook-procedures-criteria-determining-refugee-status-under-1951-convention.html)

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

SUMMARY

Following the identification of refugees in need of resettlement, UNHCR conducts three basic stages in preparing resettlement submissions to a resettlement country: 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 protection needs and risks 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 profile and summary information 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 dependents 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 admitted 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, protection needs, 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 consent to be admitted.

RESOURCES

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

(iii) WHAT IS THE SPONSOR'S ROLE IN IDENTIFYING REFUGEES FOR RESETTLEMENT?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada's refugee system allows sponsoring groups to identify refugees they wish to sponsor to come to Canada through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program. Often this is referred to as "naming." Canada will assess sponsor's ability to provide income and settlement support to the sponsored refugee and performs an eligibility assessment based on relevant provisions in immigration acts and regulations. A UNHCR referral is not necessary. In certain subclasses of the Private Sponsorship Program, a prior Refugee Status Determination is required as part of the initial application.

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 refugee status recognition if being sponsored by a Group of Five or Community Sponsor group (see subsequent segments of the Guidebook for details on sponsoring groups). 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 an application to show the government that they have financial and settlement capacity to sponsor the refugee(s) they have identified. Before processing the refugee applications overseas, the Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa assesses sponsors' eligibility and capacity to sponsor.

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Refugee Resettlement (Operation Instructions and Guidelines)" <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement.html>

IRCC, "Guide 5413 - Sponsorship Agreement Holders to privately sponsor refugees" <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides/guide-sponsor-refugee-agreement-holder-constituent-group.html>

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

(iv) 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 copies of the application forms; client identification (i.e., name, gender, date of birth, country of birth, etc.); contact information and history; education; and employment history. Migration officers also record their notes from refugee interviews and their reasons behind their decision to either approve or refuse a refugee for resettlement. Results of refugee medical examinations are also recorded in GCMS. Through GCMS, a migration officer can access case information collected by another officer working at a different location.

STANDARDIZED FORMS include:

- The Resettlement Referral Form submitted to Canada by the UNHCR; or
- Canada's Notification of Arrival Transmission form (email).

Migration officers sometimes also receive **REPORTS ON CRIMINALITY/SECURITY SCREENING** from security partners (see details on admissibility later in this Guidebook).

(v) 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 the UNHCR, and enabling Canadian migration officers to operate on their territories.

DETAIL

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 potential referral to Canada.

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

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

Some host countries also require refugees to obtain exit permits and related documentation to enable refugees to travel to Canada.

RESOURCES

International Organization for Migration, "Resettlement Assistance"
<https://www.iom.int/resettlement-assistance>

(vi) 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 was 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.4 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:

- 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, and what are the sponsors' role in orientation?
- iii. What can refugees learn in advance to prepare themselves for life in a new country?
- iv. How is information on Canada and sponsorship provided to refugees prior to arrival in their resettlement country?

RESOURCES

IOM, "Canadian Orientation Abroad"
<https://coa.iom.int/>

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/expecttool2013.pdf>

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

(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;
- Blended Visa Office-Referral (BVOR) individuals receive a “Sponsor Introduction Letter” which includes information about the sponsorship group and links to the refugees’ rights and responsibilities;
- 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 all those involved (the Government of Canada, UNHCR or other referral partners, IOM, and sponsors) in 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.

One set of pre-arrival information important for refugees is 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. Exceptionally, IOM provided orientation workshops virtually for Afghan refugees who arrived expeditiously in Canada following the fall of the Afghan government in August 2021. 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; and language courses. IOM will also provide information about the destination community where possible/available. This orientation is very important for admitted 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 migration officers at the refugees’ overseas interview.

It is important that when refugees are admitted together as a family, all family members receive appropriate counselling to prepare for resettlement.

In the case of UNHCR referrals, the UNHCR ensures utmost transparency regarding resettlement processing, highlighting that resettlement takes place based on set criteria and follows defined procedures.

All actors working with refugees in advance of their resettlement 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 also important for reducing unrealistic resettlement expectations.

Refugees are also informed by the Government and referral partners 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, AND WHAT IS THE SPONSORS' ROLE IN ORIENTATION?

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 12-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

In addition to meeting sponsored refugees at the airport and taking them to their new accommodation, 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 with an orientation about their new home and neighbourhood. Orientation includes using public transportation, a tour of their new city/neighbourhood, and a visit to the grocery store to purchase groceries including familiar foods. The refugees and sponsoring groups also benefit from meeting to discuss the refugees' resettlement needs, provide guidance and advice on life in the country of resettlement, the refugees' rights and expectations, and mutually answering any questions.

Learning about acceptable methods of payment and appropriate food (and other) costs is also important, and sponsoring groups should provide orientation in this area. During the 12-month sponsorship undertaking, refugees can expect their sponsoring group to provide them income assistance unless they become self-sufficient due to income or personal assets.

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

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/>

(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, as outlined earlier in this segment.

DETAIL

In particular, refugees 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. However, there are varying conditions in country of asylum and degrees of literacy and/or access to internet and other written materials prior to arrival, so sponsors' role in orienting refugees upon their arrival is always important and should take into account considerations that refugees may not have had the ability or capacity to access some sources of information before they arrive.

RESOURCES

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

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 INFORMATION ON CANADA AND SPONSORSHIP PROVIDED TO REFUGEES PRIOR TO ARRIVAL IN THEIR RESETTLEMENT COUNTRY?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The Government of 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. Sponsors may also provide additional pre-resettlement information.

Sponsors also have the opportunity to be in contact with refugees prior to arrival; an entire section is dedicated to detailing this in both the UK and Canada’s programs (following this section). This segment will focus on the Government’s role and partners, in Canada’s program.

DETAIL

The Canadian Orientation Abroad program, delivered by the International Organization for Migration, provides training via various delivery modes (in-person, over the phone or online) and 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.

Sponsors 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).

Upon finalization of the sponsorship case, a standard letter is sent to the refugee by the Government of Canada. The timeline on when refugees receive the letter varies depending on whether or not they have an email address on file. This letter includes contact details for the sponsor, contact information for service providers, and information on their rights as refugees. Detail on pre-arrival contact between sponsors and refugees is provided in the subsequent section. Where refugees' email addresses are not on file, a hard copy of the letter is provided by the IOM with other travel documents.

Refugees may also learn more about sponsors' role in their resettlement from the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) cultural orientation workshops, and through the Government of Canada's website.

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"
<https://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/managing-expectations/>

IRCC, "Evaluation of the Overseas Orientation Initiatives"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/ooi/findings.asp#ftn19>

Canadian Orientation Abroad, "Training Materials"
<https://coa.iom.int/training-materials>

World University Services of Canada, "Pre-Departure Guide for WUSC Sponsored Students"
<http://assets.wusc.ca/Website/Resources/StudentRefugeeProgram/predeparture.pdf>

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). Experience indicates that it is in the refugees' best interest to provide a channel for pre-arrival contact with sponsors.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

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

RESOURCES

RSTP, "Managing Expectations"

<https://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/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>

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) THE UK MODEL

Before this Guidebook describes in detail how Canada approaches contact between sponsors and refugees prior to arrival in Canada, the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative would like to showcase the approach developed in the United Kingdom (UK's) more recently designed community sponsorship program. Taking varying resource and logistical considerations into account, and the benefits of pre-arrival contact for sponsors and refugees, the UK's approach to ensuring consistent contact between sponsors and refugees occurs before refugees arrive into the UK for all sponsored refugees is a strong practice that new and existing community sponsorship programs may benefit from considering.

PRE-ARRIVAL COMMUNICATION

The United Kingdom uses an innovative approach to pre-arrival communication between sponsors and refugees, whereby pre-departure cultural orientation sessions, delivered by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), are complemented by the dissemination of factsheets.

These two-page personalized factsheets are created by community sponsor groups to inform the family of where they will be resettling to and provide information about the local area. They also include a welcome note and photos of the group, property, and location. The factsheet is translated into the families' first language and is given to the refugees by the IOM.

This communication builds the refugee-sponsor relationship prior to the family's arrival, and helps the incoming family prepare for their new life in the UK by introducing them to their sponsorship group and new home on a more personal basis. A physical factsheet has proved helpful for those without access to technology, or those who may be less technologically-literate, such as elderly refugees. Assistance is provided by the IOM to those who are illiterate.

Local Authorities are a key partner in community sponsorship in the UK, playing an integral role in the refugee-sponsor relationship and the integration of refugees. Once the UK Home Office (UKHO) approves a group as a Community Sponsor, the UKHO refers a refugee family to the group and a Local Authority for them to consider. If the group and the Local Authority confirm acceptance of the family, the family are notified, agree to be resettled by a Community Sponsor, and are provided with the group's factsheet and generic Local Authority factsheet, six to eight weeks prior to travel.

At the application stage, the Local Authority must consent to the sponsor group welcoming a family and affirm their ability to support should sponsor breakdown occur. This also ensures appropriate funding is in place should those welcomed into new communities require access to public services. Sponsors also have support from the Local Authority throughout the sponsorship process, and will work with the Local Authorities to identify and address tensions.

In turn, Local Authorities connect sponsors with services for newly arrived families, sometimes liaise with local health and/or education services to ensure any health or additional educational needs can be met, can support in claims for education funds for children and youth, provide housing checks, attend post-arrival support visits hosted by RESET, and provide general support to sponsorship groups.

RESET

RESET, the UK's community sponsorship learning hub, trains community sponsorship groups and supports Local Authorities as they work alongside and support sponsors. Support offered to Local Authorities from RESET includes a toolkit on their website which shares best practices, connecting Local Authorities to one another, providing a template Local Authority consent letter, advising Local Authorities of what funding is available and how to access it, and providing information about the scheme, process, and requirements for community sponsorship.

RESOURCES

RSTP, "Managing Expectations: A Resource Kit for Refugee Sponsors"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/expecttool2013.pdf>

Reset UK, "About Reset"
<https://resetuk.org/about/about-reset>

Reset UK, "Local Authorities Toolkit"
<https://resetuk.org/toolkits/for-local-authorities>

YouTube - Reset Communities and Refugees, "Local Authority involvement in Community Sponsorship process"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSO97Bw7q3I>

(ii) WHAT TYPES OF INFORMATION SHOULD SPONSORS COMMUNICATE TO REFUGEES PRIOR TO ARRIVAL, AND VICE VERSA?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Prior to arrival, sponsoring groups should attempt to contact the refugee, where possible and safe, to start building rapport with the refugee(s). Sponsors might want to introduce themselves and describe their role and responsibilities towards the sponsored refugees, when possible. Refugees may wish to let sponsors know if they have any special needs that might affect the sponsors' preparation for receiving and support the refugees' settlement upon arrival. The refugees' educational and employment backgrounds might help sponsors explore appropriate access to services, education, and employment opportunities. Pre-arrival communication is also important for managing refugees' and sponsors' expectations regarding the sponsors' role and refugees' preferences, and what life will be like in Canada.

DETAIL

When possible, in addition to building rapport and explaining their role and responsibilities toward the sponsored refugees, sponsors might also want to provide basic information about the community that the refugees will settle in and their rights and responsibilities prior to their travel to Canada.

Pre-arrival correspondence 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. Early relationship-building and communication also helps to manage sponsors' own expectations, which can be equally important for ensuring a successful sponsorship experience. Refugees may wish to 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 let sponsors to know if they have any special accommodations are required when securing appropriate temporary housing and assistive devices (e.g. mobility devices, visual aids), if needed. Knowing a refugee's educational and employment background can be helpful to getting a head-start with foreign credential assessments, professional networking and other types of preparations.

All refugees admitted through the Blended Visa Office-Referred program are provided with contact details of sponsors in advance of their arrival. Upon finalization of the sponsorship case, a letter is emailed to the refugee by the Government of Canada and the sponsors' contact information (phone number, email address, group name, name of contact) is included.

Sponsors may request the refugee's email address once their sponsorship application has been approved. Where a refugee's email is on file, sponsors are able to contact the refugees directly.

As identified earlier in the Guidebook, not all refugees have general access to various information sources, or capacity or ability to read such information in preparation for their arrival. Refugees sponsored through the Blended Visa Office-Referred program might not have their own email address - particularly if they reside in refugee camps. For this reason, proactively building a pre-arrival communication mechanism that leverages communication tools that are often used by refugees (e.g. Telegram, WhatsApp) should be a key consideration when designing programs, and why the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative has showcased the UK's approach to pre-arrival contact at the outset of chapter as an innovation for policymakers to consider.

RESOURCES

RSTP, "Managing Expectations: A Resource Kit for Refugee Sponsors"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/expecttool2013.pdf>

RSTP, "Managing Expectations"
<https://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/managing-expectations/>

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

RSTP, "Your Rights as a Privately Sponsored Refugee"
<https://www.rstp.ca/en/your-rights-as-a-privately-sponsored-refugee/>

RSTP, "Managing Expectations" - Video
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/managing-expectations/>

(iii) HOW CAN SPONSORS HELP TO 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. Depending on the type of sponsorship, refugees should be informed at the outset that 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 due to various reasons, including existing inventories, competing processing priorities, and challenges in the overseas environment (e.g. in the context of delays related to COVID-19). In Canada, sponsors' eligibility must first be assessed before the application is sent to an overseas migration office for processing of the refugee application. Refugees referred to the Blended Visa Office-Referred program (see 2.B.3(i)) are pre-approved as refugees by the UNHCR and Canada and deemed "travel-ready" before being matched with Canadian private sponsors, which reduces processing times for the sponsorship. Overseas processing times vary according to the location of the migration 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 and sponsors stress. Sponsors may use this time to build relationships with the refugees and prepare them for life in Canada.

In instances where refugees have been referred by sponsors (called "naming" as in Canada's Private Sponsorship Program), sponsors should notify refugees immediately with any updates to their application.

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 and 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/expecttool2013.pdf>

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

RSTP, "Your Rights as a Privately Sponsored Refugee"
<https://www.rstp.ca/en/your-rights-as-a-privately-sponsored-refugee/>

RSTP, "Managing Expectations" - Video
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/managing-expectations/>

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

(iv) 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 migration offices. If an application exceeds the estimated processing time, the refugee/sponsor may contact the Government of Canada by completing an [Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada \(IRCC\) Web Form](#).

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 migration office will inform the centralized processing office in Canada, 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, "Resettlement: Travel arrangements"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/depart-abroad/travel.html>

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

IRCC, "Web Form: Contact us online"
<https://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/>

(v) 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 app-based audio/video and messaging programs. E-mail communication may be more beneficial for longer messages or to send important or official 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.

App-based communication programs can be useful communication tools since refugees and sponsoring groups can see each other's faces, resulting in a more personal connection. However, video 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 the conversation.

Sponsoring groups and refugees may opt to use text messaging applications. Messaging 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 or official 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. Further, sponsors need to be mindful and sensitive about what they communicate to the refugees pre-arrival (e.g. sponsors should not ask personal questions of a sensitive nature or send pictures of group members partaking in situations that may be perceived negatively, such as drinking alcohol or smoking).

Finally, consider that not all refugees have the same access to technology, pre-departure conditions, language or literacy capacities to communicate the same way prior to arrival. This is again why the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative invites programs in design or improvement phases to consider the UK's approach, which enables a consistent method of communication with refugees prior to arrival, regardless of technological or linguistic capacities.

RESOURCES

RSTP, "Overview of Sponsorship Responsibilities: Pre-Arrival Duties"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/responsibilities/>

(vi) 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. 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.

Some refugees may attend English or French language courses in the host country to help minimize the language barrier and more easily integrate into Canadian society, but there can be many access barriers including cost and safety-related concerns. Sponsors may also wish to attend language courses to familiarize themselves with the primary language spoken by the newcomers they will be supporting.

Where there are language barriers between sponsors and sponsored newcomers, sponsoring groups may wish to get assistance from interpreters. Calls may be difficult to schedule depending on the sponsoring group, interpreter, and refugees' differing time zones and access to required technology.

RESOURCES

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

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

A.6 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:

- i.** How can sponsors assist refugees who have special needs?
- 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 through sponsorship may be developed?

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, "Refugee Resettlement (Operation Instructions and Guidelines)"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement.html>

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 Referred Sponsorships"
<https://www.rstp.ca/en/special-initiatives/visa-office-referred-sponsorships/>

RSTP, "Joint Assistance Sponsorships (JAS)"
<https://www.rstp.ca/en/special-initiatives/visa-office-referred-sponsorships/>

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-Referred Program - Sponsoring Refugees"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/vor.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 REFUGEES WHO HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Private sponsors are able to provide special assistance to refugees who have special needs through the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program. Overseas migration officers identify families with special needs who are admitted through Canada's Government-Assisted Refugee program. For example, survivors of trauma or torture, persons with medical disabilities, victims of systemic discrimination, or particularly large families. The Migration officers 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.

DETAIL

The JAS program is only available to Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) and their Constituent Groups (CGs) (detail on sponsor group formation has not yet been covered in the Guidebook, but will be in later sections). These sponsor groups 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

As already identified in the earlier sections of this Guidebook, 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 (often referred to as “naming”); 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 migration officer overseas determines whether the refugees will be admitted to Canada under the Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR) program, or in some cases sponsored through the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program; some GARs are then referred to the Blended Visa Office-Referral (BVOR) program by an officer in the Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa.

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 admitted in their sponsors’ community.

To be privately sponsored as a refugee by a Group of Five or a Community Sponsor (make-up of community sponsorship groups will be covered in later sections of the Guidebook), 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, another form of community sponsorship group, also described in later sections).

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.”

THROUGH A PARTNER REFERRAL ORGANIZATION: Private sponsors may contact Canada’s Refugee Sponsorship Training Program to ask if any cases are available for sponsorship through the BVOR and JAS programs. The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program is a non-governmental entity in Canada that is funded by the federal immigration department, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. The program supports sponsors, addressing their initial and ongoing training and informational needs. The organization’s role in Canada’s sponsorship program is touched upon throughout this Guidebook - including its first instance here, its role in enabling sponsors to identify refugees not referred by sponsors, for 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, "About the RSTP"
<https://www.rstp.ca/en/about-the-rstp/>

RSTP, "How to Sponsor a Refugee to Canada - the BVOR Program"
<https://www.rstp.ca/en/bvor/how-can-i-sponsor-a-refugee-to-canada/>

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>

(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).

This section will detail how sponsorship-eligible refugees are identified by referral partners.

DETAIL

Once a referral is received, the Government of Canada makes a determination regarding whether to admit the individual(s) under the Government-Assisted Refugee program or if resettlement via a form of private sponsorship may be appropriate through either the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program or the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program.

The 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 eligible 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.

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

Sponsor-referred refugees (also known as “named” refugees”) are not referred for resettlement by the UNHCR or other partner organizations, rather they are identified by the sponsor themselves.

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

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Referrals from the UNHCR and other authorized organizations"

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/government-assisted/receipt/high-commissioner.html>

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, "Projected Global Resettlement Needs - 2022"

<https://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/60d320a64/projected-global-resettlement-needs-2022-pdf.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 and provinces and territories. In accordance with its international obligations and constitutionally mandated responsibilities, the federal government determines which persons are eligible for refugee protection and admissible to Canada (as detailed in earlier sections).

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.

Many other community sponsorship programs also have unique approaches to working with various levels of government, not just on refugee selection, but on sponsorship programs writ large. Local authorities, including regional governments, municipalities and other sub-national authorities, are key actors in many community sponsorship programs across the world. The UK and Spain are two such places where recently-developed community sponsorship programs and pilots involve this type of approach. The roles of sub-national and sub-federal governments can range widely, including but not limited to roles in the selection of refugees. In Spain, community sponsorship programs are being led by regional governments. In the UK, local authorities play many key roles, including approving sponsorship applications and ensuring successful access to services. Policy makers and communities who also operate in these contexts are encouraged to read in detail about the structure of the UK's program and Spain's pilots, included in subsequent sections of this Guidebook.

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.

The Province of Quebec 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, migration 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/staticfiles/PublicWebsite/Home/ResearchPublications/BackgroundPapers/PDF/2011-89-e.pdf>

Quebec Ministry of Diversity and Inclusion, "The roles of Québec and Canada in humanitarian immigration"

<https://www.quebec.ca/en/immigration/refugees-asylum-seekers/roles-quebec-canada>

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 THROUGH SPONSORSHIP MAY BE DEVELOPED?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada has a number of refugee sponsorship models where responsibility for 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 admitted under the BVOR program receive six months of income support from Canada and six months from the sponsoring group, for a total of 12 months of income support. In addition, sponsoring groups are responsible for providing start-up costs and settlement support for the entire 12 month sponsorship period.

Other hybrid models include the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program and other programs with variations in the division of financial support provided by the government and by the sponsor (e.g. 3 months of government support and 9 months of sponsor support). The Joint Assistance Sponsorship program was described in detail earlier in this segment, and the Blended Visa Office-Referred program has been introduced throughout earlier sections.

DETAIL

The BVOR program showcases Canada's collaboration with various actors to increase access to refugee resettlement for Canadians. The BVOR program matches refugees identified for resettlement by the UNHCR with private sponsoring groups in Canada. It is referred to as "blended" because it is a cost-sharing arrangement between Canada and private sponsors. Refugees admitted 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 financial support in months 1 and 8-12, plus all of the start-up costs. Private sponsors are required to provide non-financial settlement support for the entire duration of the sponsorship period. Non-financial settlement support includes the range of supports all sponsors are responsible for as detailed throughout the Guidebook, including emotional, practical, etc.

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 sponsoring group support the refugees for up to 24 months. The Government of Canada provides the financial assistance for the full length of the sponsorship while the sponsoring group provides the non-financial settlement support.

Under various programs, Canada has provided 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 non-financial settlement support for the entire 12 months of sponsorship. Examples include; sponsorship of Sierra Leoneans in 2001 under a 4/8 model; and the current pilot Rainbow Refugee Assistance Partnership (3/9) to sponsor lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, 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>

RSTP, "Rainbow Refugee Assistance Partnership (RRAP)"
<https://www.rstp.ca/en/special-initiatives/lgbt-refugee-sponsorship-pilot-project/>

A.7 HOW ARE REFUGEES SCREENED?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

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

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- i. What should refugees be screened for to ensure they do not pose security or criminality 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, "Refugee Resettlement (Operation Instructions and Guidelines)."
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement.html>

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

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

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

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Canada conducts security and criminality screening for all visitors, immigrants, and refugee applicants. As with other foreign nationals and permanent residents, refugees can be inadmissible to Canada if they have been convicted of crimes or have committed acts or omissions that would render them inadmissible to Canada. Security-related grounds for inadmissibility include terrorism and being a danger to the security of Canada. Other serious inadmissibility grounds include organized crime and human/international rights violations (such as war crimes and crimes against humanity).

DETAIL

Sections 34-42 of Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) set out all the grounds on which non-Canadian citizens can be found to be inadmissible to Canada. For refugee applicants, officers would focus on medical, criminal and security assessments because refugees are exempt from some inadmissibility provisions (Medical assessment is covered in the next segment).

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

CSIS is mandated to conduct security screenings through ss. 14-15 of Canada's Canadian Security Intelligence Service (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 final decision on resettlement applications is made by the migration 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>

Canada Border Services Agency, "Security screening"
<http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/security-securite/screen-verify-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.

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. Furthermore, under Canada's Pre-Departure Medical Services (PDMS) component of the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP), eligible clients are covered for Outbreak Response Management and Control services. These overseas services provide an additional measure in the prevention of communicable disease transmission that could pose a danger to public health or safety 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 migration officer that he or she no longer poses a risk to public health or danger to public safety and is therefore admissible to Canada.

OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT: Under Canada's PDMS component of the IFHP, eligible clients are covered for Outbreak Response Management and Control services. Overseas services may include testing, pre-departure health screening, isolation services, and vaccines where available. In the context of COVID-19, Canada is working with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to deliver COVID-19 specific pre-departure medical services to refugees before their arrival in Canada.

RESOURCES

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/>

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.

DETAIL

CRIMINAL AND SECURITY EXAMINATIONS

- Refugees have their identity and documents verified at all stages of processing by Canadian migration officers, with support from law enforcement and security partners as needed, before they are accepted for resettlement to Canada. Highly trained and experienced officers interview refugees and conduct robust criminality and security checks, and information is checked against multiple databases.
- Migration officers may conduct in-person interviews with refugees to assess eligibility and admissibility. Canada works with Canadian and foreign law enforcement agencies and security partners such as the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) to conduct thorough security screening of refugee applicants.
- CSIS has the authority to conduct security screenings through ss. 14-15 of Canada's CSIS Act, which is used to support administration of 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 migration 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 (detailed later in this section).

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. Migration officers may 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 migration 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.
- Fingerprints are compared against the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's (RCMP) records of known criminals, past refugee claimants, persons previously deported, and previous immigration applicants. Fingerprints are also automatically checked against Migration 5 partners' immigration fingerprint holdings (with the exception of the UK).
- Canada works with Canadian and foreign law enforcement agencies and security partners such as the Canada 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 admissibility is made by the migration 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.

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

- A Government of Canada authorized physician will complete a medical exam of each refugee, which includes screening for infectious 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.
- 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/I-2.5/>

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/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/processing/det-admissibility.asp>

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/>

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

IRCC, "Resettlement from overseas: Conducting interviews"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/admissibility/conduct-interview.html>

(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 was expanded to provide coverage to refugees for the costs of their immigration medical examinations and follow-up treatment for diseases affecting admissibility to Canada (i.e. active tuberculosis and untreated syphilis); infectious disease prevention through the provision of selected vaccinations on a voluntary basis; medical support during travel to Canada (e.g. medical attendants); and activities for the management and control of infectious diseases.

RESOURCES

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 of the reasons under the relevant provisions of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) and their application for permanent residence will be refused. 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 Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) 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 the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program have already been determined to be eligible and admissible by the time a match is made with a private sponsoring group in Canada. For all other private sponsorship streams, if the refugee does not pass the screening, the migration 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. Before a refusal is made on an application, the refugee will have the opportunity to respond to concerns of the migration officer by way of a procedural fairness letter.

Refusals are documented in the Government of Canada's Global Case Management System. The migration officer must include notes in the database explaining the reasons for refusing the application.

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

- **REQUEST RECONSIDERATION:** When a request for reconsideration is made, migration 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 migration officer acted outside of their jurisdiction; (4) whether new evidence was submitted that affects the assessment; (5) whether there are concerns regarding fraud or misrepresentation; and (6) whether an application for leave and for judicial review is refused or granted.
- **JUDICIALLY REVIEW THE DECISION:** The Federal Court of Canada will examine whether the migration officer's process and reasons for refusing the application were reasonable and correct in law. If the court determines that the migration officer's decision was not fair or reasonable, or the officer made an error in law, the court may set aside the migration officer's decision and order another migration officer to redetermine (review) the case. A redetermination does not mean that the new migration 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 "dependent" in order to resettle to Canada with his/her caretakers. Sponsors may work with refugees to pursue the above options.

RESOURCES

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>

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:

- 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, "Refugee Resettlement (Operational Instructions and Guidelines)."
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement.html>

IRCC, "Resettlement: Travel arrangements"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/depart-abroad/travel.html>

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>

(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 affixed into the document. 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 for Resettlement to Canada 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, "Refugee Resettlement (Operation Instructions and Guidelines)"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement.html>

IRCC, "Resettlement: Travel arrangements"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/depart-abroad/travel.html>

IRCC, "Program Delivery Instructions (PDI); Immigration Loans Program (ILP)"
<http://cicintranet.ci.gc.ca/connexion/tools-outils/service/loan-pret/index-eng.aspx>

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

(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 12 months 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."

Before coming to Canada, refugees sign loan agreements for the cost of their travel, which is then arranged by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). After arrival, refugees are issued loans by the Government of Canada to recoup these costs, which they are obliged to start repaying after their first year in Canada. The transportation loan includes approved service fees from the IOM as well as other related expenses. While not required, sponsoring groups may offer to assist refugees in repaying their transportation loans.

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 12 months after refugees arrive in Canada. The larger the loan amount, the more time refugees are given to repay the full amount.

As of February 21, 2018 new loans are interest free and existing loans will not accumulate further interest.

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 sponsored refugees' travel to Canada. In exceptional cases, Canada has waived the costs of travel (e.g. in the resettlement of 25,000 Syrian refugees in late 2015 and early 2016).

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Program Delivery Instructions (PDI): Immigration Loans Program (ILP)"
<http://cictrinet.ci.gc.ca/connexion/tools-outils/service/loan-pret/index-eng.aspx>

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 the Blended 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;
- Healthcare;
- Language training;
- Employment opportunities; and
- The presence of family members.

When cases are referred for resettlement to Canada by the UNHCR or another designated referral organization, and Canada selects them for resettlement through the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program or Joint Assistance (JAS) program, 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;
- Preferred community of settlement/destination depending on size of the host community or employment or available local resources
- Any special needs or services required;
- Family size and composition.

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Refugee Resettlement (Operation Instructions and Guidelines)"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement.html>

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** Who is eligible to sponsor and what is their relationship to government?
- B.3** How are eligible sponsors screened?
- B.4** What are sponsors' responsibilities?
- B.5** What steps do sponsors need to take to prepare for the refugees' arrival?
- B.6** 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 community sponsorship program hinges in part on mobilizing and engaging private actors to sponsor and integrate refugees into society.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- 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. Tools and community engagement in Australia.
- v. What supports are available to maintain community interest and engagement?
- vi. What other options to support refugees are available to private actors?

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>

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

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/>

(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, including the increased resettlement of refugees, and the 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) 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)
<https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/may-2016/lessons-learned-from-the-indochinese-and-syrian-refugee-movements/>

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

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 communities in refugee sponsorship 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 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 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 communities.

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 Service 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.

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>

(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 that 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 the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Toolkit (Alberta Urban Municipalities Association).

TARGETED ADVICE on key issues affecting refugees, for example, 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 the 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.

CANADIAN AND INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES

Reset UK, Toolkit for Raising Awareness
<https://resetuk.org/toolkits/for-raising-awareness>

Reset UK, Toolkit for Lead Sponsors
<https://resetuk.org/toolkits/for-lead-sponsors>

Environics Institute, "Private Refugee Sponsorship in Canada, 2021 Market Study"
<https://www.environicsinstitute.org/projects/project-details/private-refugee-sponsorship-in-canada--2021-market-study>

Amnesty International, "Guide to Community Sponsorship"
<https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/200414-Community-Sponsorship-Guide.pdf>

Naomi Alboim, "Lessons learned from the Indochinese and Syrian refugee movements" (Policy Options, 2016)
<https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/may-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, "Settlement Experiences of Iraqi Refugees"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/settlement-experiences-of-iraqi-refugees/>

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/>

Kevin Pottie, Christina Greenaway, Ghayda Hassan, Charles Hui, Laurence Kirmayer, "Caring for a newly arrived Syrian refugee family" (Canadian Medical Association Journal, 2015)
<https://www.cmaj.ca/content/188/3/207>

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

(iv) TOOLS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

In 2017, the Australian Government launched the Community Support Program (CSP), where individuals, businesses and community organizations could support the resettlement of refugees to Australia. Within the CSP, sponsors were responsible for providing settlement and financial support for refugees, including the costs for visa processing, travel, accommodations, and medical screenings. The launch of the CSP triggered a renewed focus on the potential role that community sponsorship could play in both expanding and improving refugee resettlement in Australia.

In 2018, two major civil society initiatives were launched to encourage both government and the Australian community to support the introduction of a more affordable and community-oriented sponsorship program.

Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia and the Group Mentorship Program

Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (previously the Community Refugee Sponsorship Initiative) was created by a number of leading civil society organizations in 2018 to encourage the Australian government and community sector to develop and support a new community refugee sponsorship program in Australia that would expand and improve refugee resettlement in Australia.

In addition to core research, policy development and advocacy functions, CRSA has also been operationalising key elements of this model since 2020 through its development and implementation of an innovative 'group mentorship program.' The program mobilizes, trains and supports groups of five to provide holistic support to newly arrived refugee households post-arrival, complementing government-funded settlement services. Through this program, CRSA has now mobilized and trained more than 800 individual volunteers (members of more than 80 newly-formed local 'mentor groups') to provide 6-12 months of practical support to newcomer families as a precursor to a new full sponsorship program, and as a way of harnessing much-needed support for the unexpected influx of Afghan evacuees. These volunteer groups are part of a national community of practice that CRSA convenes at least six times a year to enable groups to learn from one another as well as from professionals.

CRSA has also developed a network of approximately 200 civil society organizations (established clubs, faith groups, schools and businesses) who are keen to support the successful implementation of community sponsorship programs in Australia.

My New Neighbour Campaign (Amnesty International Australia)

Amnesty International Australia, in addition to being a founding member of CRSA, launched the My New Neighbour campaign in 2018 to mobilize civil society actors in support of the introduction of a new community sponsorship program in Australia. This campaign highlighted widespread support for community sponsorship and advocated for several changes to Australia's CSP. The desired changes to the CSP included: reducing the cost for sponsors to participate, prioritizing the resettlement of the most at-risk refugees, increasing the number of refugees that could be welcomed through this program, and ensuring that the number of refugees welcomed through the CSP is additional to the traditional resettlement program. The campaign highlighted the significant number of people and communities that are interested in community sponsorship to make a case for changes that would improve the accessibility of the program.

The My New Neighbour campaign mobilized community groups and local governments to voice their support for community sponsorship programs to urge the government to expand the existing CSP. Some of the key activities of this campaign included:

- Obtaining almost 40,000 signatures on a petition for the Australian Government to expand the CSP.
- Building support for the CSP within regional governments and leadership: by 2021, 40 Mayors and/or local governments had taken action in support of the CSP by sending letters to the national government or passing motions within their regions.
- Highlighting the impact of community sponsorship and resettlement initiatives through storytelling.

One of the strengths of this campaign is that it sought to reframe the narrative around refugees by sharing the stories of refugee newcomers alongside those of welcomers. “My New Neighbour Stories” events were held across the country to illustrate what community sponsorship looks like in practice and to celebrate the work of welcoming communities. By featuring the stories of those with lived refugee experience, these events created the opportunity for those who are most impacted by community sponsorship to speak about the challenges, opportunities and impact of resettlement in Australia. The leadership of those with lived refugee experience was integral to the impact of the storytelling events and the My New Neighbour campaign more broadly.

Review of the CSP

The Australian Government announced a commitment to undertake a review of the CSP in late 2019 in response to an independent Review into Integration, Employment and Settlement Outcomes for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants, Investing in Refugees, Investing in Australia (the Shergold Review). The CSP Review was led by the Commonwealth Coordinator-General for Migrant Services in 2020-21.

One of the key findings of the CSP review was that the program provides a valuable alternative pathway to family reunion for humanitarian entrants, but some settings, such as the high upfront costs and the complexity of Assurance of Support (AoS), requirements are a barrier to greater engagement in the program.

The Department of Home Affairs is currently implementing changes to the CSP following the review, including significantly reducing the Visa Application Charge to improve the accessibility of the program.

Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot

The Australian Government announced the Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP) in December 2021. CRISP responds to findings from the 2020 Review of the Community Sponsorship Program by the Commonwealth Coordinator-General for Migrant Services. The review found that global community support models can improve economic, social and language learning outcomes for refugees, particularly through building social capital.

Under the program, refugee visa holders receive settlement support directly from trained volunteer community groups, called Community Supporter Groups (CSGs). CRISP aims to achieve optimal settlement outcomes with the help of Australian community members who want to help refugees settle into life in Australia.

CRISP operates as a dedicated settlement pathway for refugees who:

- do not have family links in Australia
- are referred to Australia by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for resettlement.

A total of 1,500 refugees will be settled through CRISP up until 30 June 2025. The CSGs will help CRISP participants to settle in Australia by providing a range of support for 12 months from their date of arrival in Australia.

The Australian Government has contracted CRSA to implement and administer CRISP. The Australian Government has also contracted the University of Queensland to conduct an evaluation of CRISP to measure the settlement and integration outcomes. The preliminary outcomes of the evaluation will inform future thinking on community support model, including any proposals to extend or grow the CRISP. In December 2021, the Australian Government announced a \$8.6 million investment to establish and support CRISP.

RESOURCES

Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia, "Group Mentorship Program"
<https://refugeesponsorship.org.au/what-we-do/group-mentorship-program/>

The Guardian, "Coalition slashes costs for sponsoring refugees as new resettlement scheme hailed as 'watershed moment'"
<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/dec/18/coalition-slashes-costs-for-sponsoring-refugees-as-new-resettlement-scheme-hailed-as-watershed-moment>

Amnesty International Australia, "Communities Behind Refugee Sponsorship"
https://www.amnesty.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Communities-Behind-Refugee-Sponsorship_screen.pdf

Amnesty International Australia, "My New Neighbour: A Way to Bring Refugees to Safety in Australia"
<https://www.amnesty.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2018-refugee-toolkit-1.pdf>

Amnesty International Australia, "My New Neighbour Stories: Event Guide"
<https://www.amnesty.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/My-New-Neighbour-Stories-TOOLKIT.pdf>

The Government of Australia, "Enhanced support for refugee settlement and integration"
<https://minister.homeaffairs.gov.au/AlexHawke/Pages/enhanced-support-for-refugee-settlement-and-integration.aspx>

(v) 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. For example, the Government of 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 help refugees integrate into Canadian society.

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. The Government of Canada funds the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) to facilitate regular workshops across the country to educate Canadians about Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees program and the Blended Visa Office-Referred program. The workshop topics range from "What is sponsorship" and "How can you sponsor a refugee,?" to guidance on completing the application forms, to sponsorship ethics, to 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 public awareness campaign launched in January 2016 by Amnesty International and the Canadian Council for Refugees. The campaign was 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.

RESOURCES

Naomi Alboim, "Lessons learned from the Indochinese and Syrian refugee movements" (Policy Options, 2016)
<https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/may-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, "Canadian experiences in community sponsorship"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJZPvfPlyNk>

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

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

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

Refugee Sponsorship Support Program
<https://www.rstp.ca/en/special-initiatives/the-refugee-sponsorship-support-program-ssp/>

Refugee 613
<https://www.refugee613.ca/>

(vi) WHAT OTHER OPTIONS TO SUPPORT REFUGEES ARE AVAILABLE TO PRIVATE ACTORS?

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 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 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 activities are offered under the Community Connections Stream of Canada's Settlement Program and are 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 longtime community members. 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, promote a sense of belonging, and enable newcomers to build social capital. These services are based on local contexts and needs in three main areas:

- **SETTLEMENT SUPPORT IN PUBLIC SPACES** : Schools, libraries and other community locations can act as gateways to settlement services by offering direct and timely access to a broad range of services and bridging to other service providers. The Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) initiative places settlement workers from community agencies in schools that have high numbers of newcomer and refugee students. Targeted settlement supports include: in-school supports, mentorship, leadership training, social connections, peer supports, as well as referrals to external community supports such as homework clubs, sports-activities, formal or informal language training (e.g., conversation circles), counselling and mental health supports. Post-secondary transitional supports include assistance with applications to university programs and referrals to programs focused on labour market preparation and career development.

- **COMMUNITY-BASED GROUP EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES:** Offering place-based opportunities for newcomers to connect with social and geographic surroundings, build new relationships, learn about their new home, and participate more fully in Canadian life. Activities may include (but are not limited to):
 - a. **Event/visit or field trips** (e.g. museum visit, health centre, police services).
 - b. **Sports or recreation events** (e.g. soccer game, basketball tournament, wellness session).
 - c. **Neighborhood day or community events** (e.g. local gathering or celebration, exhibition, storytelling, cooking class/potlucks).
- **TARGETED MATCHING, NETWORKING AND WORKSHOP:** Offering one-on-one, family and group activities to support newcomers to understand their new community, develop new capacities, and make essential connections to become fully engaged in Canadian life.
 - a. **Conversation Circles** are facilitated on a regular basis to assist newcomers in developing their English and/or French language skills with peers outside of traditional classroom and workplace settings.
 - b. **Targeted Matching (Canada Connects):** [Canada Connects](#) is an initiative that facilitates cross cultural interactions by matching newcomers and refugees with Canadian citizens or long-time community members who provide essential guidance and informal support in the settlement and integration process. Examples include: providing general orientation and support on how to deal with Canadian systems and institutions (educational, legal, political, healthcare); discussing challenges; preparing and sharing food; attending or participating in a cultural or sporting event; offering advice to improve well-being; offering advice on workplace culture; or offering referrals to employment contacts or employment agencies to assist with job search and labour market integration.
 - c. **Networking activity with other newcomers or Canadian citizens** (e.g. meet and greet).
 - d. **Youth leadership project** (e.g. peer support, youth engagement activities).
 - e. **Other regular group activity to address ongoing needs or interests** (e.g. homework club, literacy group, writing workshop).

Non-government groups organize initiatives to match Canadian volunteers with admitted refugees. When considering starting up volunteer programs, 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

IRCC, "Community Connections"

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/community-connections.html>

Refugee 613, "Volunteer"

<http://www.refugee613.ca/pages/volunteer>

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, "About BuddyUp"

<http://www.buddyup.ca/about/>

Catholic Centre for Immigrants, "Community Connections"

<http://cciottawa.ca/programs-services/community-connections/>

B.2 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:

- 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 admitted 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 members be ineligible to sponsor?

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Groups of Five: Who can apply"

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/groups-who.asp>

IRCC, "Determine your eligibility - Community Sponsors: Who can apply"

<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, "Sponsorship Agreement Holders"

<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugee-sponsorship/sponsorship-agreement-holders/>

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 the UNHCR through its Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) and Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) programs.

DETAIL

Canada receives referrals of refugees identified for resettlement by the UNHCR and other designated referral organizations. Out of these refugees, the majority are admitted directly by the Government of Canada. Some, however, are selected by the centralized processing office in Canada to be matched with private sponsors in Canada who will provide them with support. These are known as Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) refugees. In BVOR refugee sponsorships, the government and the private sponsor share the financial costs of sponsorship but the private sponsor is responsible for settlement support. In addition, sponsors may be matched with refugees under the Joint Assistance Sponsorships (JAS) program. Under the JAS program, government-assisted refugees with special needs (e.g. victims of trauma or torture, particular medical conditions, exceptionally large families), receive full financial support throughout the sponsorship period (normally two years) from the government and full settlement support from private sponsors.

In Canada, the matching process is administered by the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP). The Government of Canada’s centralized processing office in Canada provides case information of refugees identified for the BVOR program or the JAS program to RSTP. RSTP then posts non-identifiable profile information in an online database. New sponsoring groups must register with RSTP in order to access the full profile and participate in the matching process. The registration process includes participating in orientation and training. Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH) are automatically registered to receive notification about available 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 sponsor the refugee(s). This information includes the size of the family, family composition (e.g. ages and gender of family members), nationality, country of asylum, primary language(s) spoken, and an indication of the refugee’s level of settlement need (e.g. ‘low’).

When refugee profiles are available, RSTP notifies all SAHs and registered Groups of Five (G5s) and Constituent Groups (CSs), who can access the database and view the profiles. Each profile is posted for a limited amount of time (e.g. 4 weeks). If a sponsoring group is interested in sponsoring a refugee family on the list, they will indicate their interest through the database by placing a ‘hold’ on a profile and confirming their interest by a due date provided by RSTP.

Once a match is made, RSTP informs the Government of Canada that the sponsorship will proceed. The centralized processing office in Canada will provide the sponsoring group with additional details of the refugees to enable the group to complete the sponsorship application forms. Sponsors have six weeks from the date the profile is first referred to RSTP to submit their sponsorship application forms to the centralized processing office in Canada.

Canada requires sponsorship application forms to ensure that 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 timelines provided, the Government of Canada will proceed with resettling the refugees through the Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR) program.

RESOURCES

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

RSTP, "Sponsoring Refugees through the Blended Visa Office-Referral (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 12 months in Canada. Refugees often have family members in Canada who organize sponsoring groups and undertake many of the sponsorship responsibilities. It is also common for diaspora organizations to organize the sponsorship of 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. At time of writing in early 2022, there are about 130 SAHs across Canada of various sizes. Depending on their organizational capacity, large SAHs might 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 individual 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 must demonstrate that they can meet the financial and non-financial requirements of the sponsorship 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 determines if the G5 is eligible to sponsor. Groups of Five must undergo financial and Settlement Plan assessments each time they wish 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 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, who 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.

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Guide 5413 - Sponsorship Agreement Holders to privately sponsor refugees"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides/guide-sponsor-refugee-agreement-holder-constituent-group.html>

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 become a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH), organizations must apply to the Government of Canada during the application period, demonstrate that they meet requirements set out, and, if approved, sign a sponsorship agreement with the Government of Canada.

DETAIL

Generally, new SAH applicants have sponsorship experience and are expected to sponsor multiple refugee cases each year if approved. Applicant organizations must have the personnel and finances available to ensure the settlement needs of the sponsored refugee(s) are in place before their arrival.

Under current requirements (2021), to become a SAH, an organization must:

- have been incorporated (a legal organization) for at least two years;
- be physically located in Canada;
- be interested in, and capable of, sponsoring more than five refugees or refugee families per year; and
- have the resources and support network to be an effective SAH.

When first applying to become a SAH, a Sponsor Assessment form must be submitted for each person with signing authority (i.e. those that will submit Sponsorship Undertakings on behalf of the SAH), to ensure SAH members meet sponsorship eligibility requirements. Should people in this position change, the SAH needs to formally request this change in writing to the Government of Canada and submit a new Sponsor Assessment form.

Once approved, for the first two years, SAHs and their Constituent Groups must include a Settlement Plan with all sponsorship undertakings.

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, for assistance.

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 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 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 meet the eligibility requirements to sponsor refugees.

DETAIL

Canada produces a Sponsorship Cost Table, which sets out the estimated 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. Through the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program, which is funded by the Government of Canada, an easy-to-use calculator has also been made available to sponsors to calculate minimum financial requirements. The calculator allows users to input information including city (rates vary across Canada), family size, as well as other variables.

GROUP OF FIVE: Each member 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 as their financial capacity is assessed at the time the organization applies to become a SAH. 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, "Guide 5413 - Sponsorship Agreement Holders to privately sponsor refugees"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides/guide-5413-sponsor-refugee-agreement-holder-constituent-group.html>

RSTP, "Minimum Financial Support Calculator"
<https://www.rstp.ca/calc/?lang=en>

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>

(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. 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 Plans to the Government of Canada outlining how the group intends to provide settlement assistance, counselling, and support to the admitted 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.

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 the special needs of the refugees?
- Do all members of the sponsoring group plan to contribute to the sponsorship?

RESOURCES

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 ADMITTED 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 12 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 and settlement support for the duration of the sponsorship period. A sponsorship undertaking generally lasts 12 months or until the refugee becomes self-sufficient, whichever happens first.

In special circumstances determined prior to the refugees' arrival, 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 36 months. The sponsoring group can refuse this request but the case may be cancelled as a result of the refusal.

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;
- The sponsoring group does not demonstrate that it has the settlement capacity to sponsor;
- The sponsoring group does not have enough members or does not meet other eligibility requirements;
- The sponsoring group does not have enough members living in the community of settlement, all of which have been detailed earlier in this segment;
- 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 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 prove to the Government of Canada that it is eligible, which includes having the financial and settlement capacity to sponsor.

In addition, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations state 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;
- 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.3 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:

Explore 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]). 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), 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;
- **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;
- **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 dependents;
- **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, "Guide 5413 - Sponsorship Agreement Holders to privately sponsor refugees"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides/guide-sponsor-refugee-agreement-holder-constituent-group.html>

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, 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.

DETAIL

The Government of 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, as discussed earlier, ROC-O sends the refugee forms and supporting documentation to the overseas visa office serving the refugees' host state for processing.

In addition to processing applications to privately sponsor refugees, ROC-O also processes Blended Visa Office-Referred sponsorships 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>

IRCC, "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, "Guide 5413 - Sponsorship Agreement Holders to privately sponsor refugees"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides/guide-sponsor-refugee-agreement-holder-constituent-group.html>

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(s) applying for resettlement to Canada each fill out application forms prescribed by the Government of Canada. They submit the forms to a centralized processing office in Canada, which, for Groups of Five and Community Sponsors, decides whether the sponsors meet the eligibility requirements for sponsorship and have demonstrated the 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) 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 refugee(s) throughout the settlement year?
- Does the Settlement Plans 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 determines that the sponsoring group is eligible and has financial and settlement capacity to sponsor, the application will be approved.

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 the Government of Canada's Global Case Management System (GCMS). Once that step is complete, ROC-O will send the refugee's 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 used to track the processing of the sponsorship application. 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).

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Guide 5413 - Sponsorship Agreement Holders to privately sponsor refugees"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides/guide-sponsor-refugee-agreement-holder-constituent-group.html>

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.

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) at the Resettlement Operations Centre – Ottawa; and overseas processing of the refugees’ application for permanent residence by the migration 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.

In exceptional circumstances – for example, when the refugees are most at risk 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.

B.4 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:

- 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>

RSTP, "Overview of Sponsorship Responsibilities"
<https://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/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 the UNHCR or another referral organization through the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) or Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) programs, they do not need to send forms outlining the refugees' circumstances, as the refugees have already been approved for resettlement by UNHCR and the Government of Canada;
- For Groups of Five and Community Sponsors, providing documentation demonstrating financial capacity;
- 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; and
- Complying with any government requests to mediate a potential sponsorship breakdown.

RESOURCES

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

RSTP, "Overview of Sponsorship Responsibilities"
<https://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/responsibilities/>

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

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

For refugees sponsored through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program, 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; and
- Offering support for interview preparation.

For all sponsors, communicating with refugees to learn about their particular resettlement needs is important, where pre-arrival contact is possible (recall earlier sections on pre-arrival contact).

After refugees arrive, sponsors of refugees entering through any sponsorship category have a legal responsibility to provide them with care, lodging, settlement assistance, and support for the duration of the sponsorship period. Normally, this lasts 12 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; and
- Helping in the search for employment.

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 equal 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).

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

RSTP, "Overview of Sponsorship Responsibilities"
<https://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/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 in 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 the Resettlement Services Assurance Team (RSAT).

Currently, the role of actively monitoring sponsorship obligations is the responsibility of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC's) RSAT. This team is responsible for maintaining open dialogue with sponsors and newcomers through various channels of communication to identify if financial and non-financial sponsorship requirements are being provided by the sponsorship group to the sponsored person(s). When necessary, the RSAT will initiate a case review process to review the support that has been provided and help ensure the sponsorship obligations are fulfilled.

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. The Government of 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, the Government of Canada established the role of "Refugee Liaison Officer" (RLO) and recruited 55 RLOs across the country to provide a link between federal, provincial, and municipal governments, 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 Plans 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 admitted 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, IRCC's Resettlement Services Assurance Team (RSAT) conducts post-arrival assurance activities to ensure that the newcomers are receiving the necessary financial and non-financial support from their sponsors. To accomplish this, officers may engage directly with newcomers through such activities as online surveys, telephone interviews and emails received to the RSAT mailbox. When potential gaps in support being provided or unmet needs have been identified, Officers may then initiate the case review process and give sponsors the opportunity to fulfill their obligations outlined in the sponsorship undertaking and Settlement Plans to avoid a potential sponsorship breakdown and/or sponsorship default.

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

IRCC's Resettlement Services Assurance Team (RSAT), 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

IRCC's Resettlement Services Assurance Team (RSAT) is responsible for ensuring that sponsors are fulfilling their responsibilities to newcomers. This is achieved by officers conducting routine online and telephone monitoring surveys with newcomers to review financial and non-financial support provided by sponsors to ensure that sponsorship requirements are being maintained throughout the sponsorship period. In the event a sponsor is unable to fulfill their sponsorship obligations during the sponsorship period, an officer may declare a sponsorship breakdown and/or sponsorship default.

Furthermore, 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.

If the refugees have not yet arrived, the Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa may take certain measures to ensure the sponsoring group meets or will meet eligibility requirements. This includes, for example, reviewing a sponsoring group's eligibility and addressing requests to withdraw sponsorships. If the refugees have already arrived, RSAT will monitor whether the sponsoring groups are fulfilling their responsibilities and mediate any disputes among sponsors or between sponsors and refugees.

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. These consequences are addressed in the next section.

RESOURCES

RSTP, "Overview of Sponsorship Responsibilities"
<https://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/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, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC's) Resettlement Services Assurance Team (RSAT) will attempt to resolve the dispute through mediation. If no solution is found, IRCC may declare a sponsorship breakdown. If IRCC determines that sponsors were not meeting program requirements prior to the breakdown, they may be declared in sponsorship default.

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. If the Government of Canada determines that sponsors were not meeting program requirements prior to the breakdown, they may 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.5 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:

- 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. What types of preparation are necessary to immediately welcome refugees and prepare for longer-term stay?
- iv. Can communication pre-arrival between sponsors and refugees help to determine the latter's needs upon arrival?

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Resettlement: Travel arrangements"

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/depart-abroad/travel.html>

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, Community Sponsors and 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, Community Sponsors and 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 the Government of 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 the 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. While established SAHs with more than two years of experience are expected to prepare Settlement Plans for their cases, they are not required to submit them as part of their application packages.

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 settlement;
- 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, 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; and
- Where possible, as discussed in earlier sections of this Guidebook, communicating with the refugees before arrival to introduce the sponsoring group to them, set settlement expectations, and understand any particular preferences or needs they may have that should be addressed post-arrival. 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/>

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. The Government of Canada sends a Notice of Arrival Transmission to the sponsoring group as well as the local Resettlement Assistance Program office where the refugees will resettle, in the case of Government-Assisted Refugees or refugees coming under Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS). The Resettlement Assistance Program is a contribution program that has two main components: income support and assistance for a range of immediate essential services. However, because the Resettlement Assistance Program targets assistance to Government Assisted Refugees, it is not covered in this Guidebook.

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).

Issuance of the Notice of Arrival depends on when the travel arrangements are finalized, which can be difficult to control or predict. The Government of 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 - for example, large movements to Canada - it may be difficult for the Government of 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, "Refugee Resettlement (Operation Instructions and Guidelines)."
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement.html>

IRCC, "Resettlement: Travel arrangements"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/depart-abroad/travel.html>

(iii) 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 children in school, finding appropriate clothing, explaining how to budget available funds, and providing orientation.

DETAIL

Before arrival (if possible) 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, as well as information concerning Canadian culture, the refugees' community of resettlement, and the refugees' rights and obligations in the country of resettlement.

Members of the sponsoring group (as well as Canadian family members of the refugees, where applicable) should consider greeting the refugees at the airport. Although the refugees may be exhausted and overwhelmed from their journeys, this is a milestone moment for many refugees and sponsors. 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 for 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 or friends in Canada (who may or may not be members of the sponsoring group), they 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/>

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

(iv) 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. Mechanisms that can enable this pre-arrival communication were discussed earlier in this Guidebook, including how this is done in Canada and the UK's programs. This section returns to the benefits of pre-arrival contact, focusing on the benefits of pre-arrival communication for the sponsors by enabling the sponsors to prepare for the refugees' arrival.

Where possible, pre-arrival contact between sponsors and refugees helps develop trust and helps sponsoring groups 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.

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, in the case of privately sponsored refugees who are referred (or "named") by sponsors for sponsorship, communication also helps the refugees feel more comfortable when meeting their sponsors in person upon arrival. Sponsors must be mindful that their role is to provide a 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. These 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. For Privately Sponsored Refugees, sponsors should be cautious about raising such topics before an application for admission to Canada is approved. Premature discussions about life in Canada will raise expectations and cause significant disappointment if the application is refused. This is not relevant for Blended Visa Office-Referred refugees, as refugees admitted through this program are referred by UNHCR or another referral partner and once matched with sponsors, are already approved for resettlement to Canada.

RESOURCES

RSTP, "What to expect"

<http://www.rstp.ca/en/refugees/what-to-expect/>

RSTP, "Managing Expectations"

<https://www.rstp.ca/en/infosheet/managing-expectations-2/>

RSTP, "Settlement Preparation"

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

B.6 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:

- i.** Where and how do sponsoring groups receive information on the community sponsorship program and receive guidance and support before or during their sponsorship undertaking?
- ii.** Who covers the costs of resources and training?
- iii.** Are some or all sponsoring group members required or encouraged to attend trainings?
- iv.** What other individuals or organizations in their community should sponsors share their information on community 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, "Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/guide-private-sponsorship-refugees-program/section-2.html>

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

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 THE COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM 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, formerly sponsored refugee newcomers, experienced sponsors, Canadians with family abroad requiring refugee sponsorship, settlement services, wider service organizations, 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 in small or rural communities may need to rely more on internet and telephone communications to seek out information and ask questions. Actors who 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. RSTP provides resources and ongoing training to sponsoring groups before and after the refugees' arrival. 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. Typical topics covered in RSTP's materials include sponsorship eligibility criteria, preparing applications, sponsorship application processing, and the sponsoring group's responsibilities upon the refugees' arrival.
- **LOCAL SETTLEMENT AGENCIES** have vast experience in helping admitted refugees adjust to life in Canada. Settlement workers are a rich source of information and experience for sponsors.
- **COALITIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUPS** may also provide support and facilitate workshops to groups preparing to sponsor refugees. Refugee 613, a coalition of citizens, settlement agencies, sponsoring groups and community partners in Ottawa, is working to provide refugees with the building blocks of successful integration. As another example, Lifeline Syria was launched in 2015 to aid sponsor groups in welcoming and resettling Syrian refugees in the Greater Toronto Area. Lifeline Syria is not-for-profit that is engaged in recruiting, training and support sponsor groups; collaborating with the Syrian community to be certain that they help to inform the initiative; and liaising with Sponsorship Agreement Holders and the settlement sector.
- **THE CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES**, a national-level organization that advocates for refugees' rights, provides resources to assist sponsoring groups in providing settlement support. Coalitions and community engagement groups may also provide support and workshops to groups preparing to sponsor refugees.
- **RESETTLED REFUGEES**, particularly those who have been resettled through private sponsorship, can provide valuable insights on their experiences - what worked well, what did not, and how resettlement through sponsorship can be made the best possible experience for the newly arriving 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 and challenges associated with managing expectations and inter-cultural differences. Sponsorship Agreement Holders are also 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.
- **SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT HOLDERS (SAHs)** provide supplementary training to their Constituent Groups (CGs) regarding their agreement with Canada and responsibilities towards sponsored refugees.
- **SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT HOLDERS (SAH) ASSOCIATION:** the Government of Canada funds the Navigation Unit (formerly SAH Secretariat) which supports the SAH Council. The SAH Council acts as a representative body for the SAH Association and meets on a regular basis with officials from the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada also provides funding for an annual SAH conference that allows for mutual exchanges of successes, challenges, and best practices between sponsors.

RESOURCES

Canadian Council for Refugees
<https://ccrweb.ca/>

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>

Lifeline Syria "About"
<http://www.lifelinesyria.ca/community-engagement/>

SAH Association
<http://www.sahassociation.com/>

IRCC, "Refugee Sponsorship Training Program"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/private-rstp.asp>

(II) WHO COVERS THE COSTS OF RESOURCES AND TRAINING?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

The Government of Canada fully funds the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP), one of the largest programs to provide training and resources on refugee sponsorship. Funding is also provided for the Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) Navigation Unit, which supports the SAH Council.

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

RSTP is designed to address the information and ongoing training needs of Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) and their Constituent Groups, Groups of Five, and Community Sponsors on a national level. Through its funding to RSTP, the Government of Canada also provides funding for an annual SAH conference that allows for the mutual exchange of successes, challenges, and best practices between sponsors.

Funding is also provided for the SAH Navigation Unit, which supports the SAH Council. The SAH Council acts as a representative body for the SAH Association and meets on a regular basis with officials from the Government of Canada.

Other organizations are funded through provincial and municipal government grants, community foundations, the United Way, membership fees, and donations from private individuals and businesses.

Local community groups may provide training on a volunteer, no-cost basis.

RESOURCES

RSTP, "Workshops"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/training/workshops/>

(iii) 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 12 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 members, or just 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.

Organizations applying to become Sponsorship Agreement Holders are required to take mandatory training from the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program in support of their application. Organizations who are assessed and approved are also required to take additional training regarding their obligations under the Private Sponsorship Program.

RESOURCES

Refugee 613, "Sponsorship Training and Legal Advice"
<https://www.refugee613.ca/pages/sponsorship-training-and-legal-advice>

(iv) WHAT OTHER INDIVIDUALS OR ORGANIZATIONS IN THEIR COMMUNITY SHOULD SPONSORS SHARE THEIR INFORMATION ON COMMUNITY 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 – for example, settlement agencies, 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.

If sponsored refugees come with particular skills or credentials, sponsors should consult with employers to determine whether there is a path to employment in that 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 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, which may promote further advocacy to improve the lives of all marginalized groups.

2.C SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION

ACTORS MAY CONSIDER:

- C.1 What settlement and integration costs need to be considered and who covers them?
- C.2 What is the status of refugees upon arrival?
- C.3 What post-arrival supports are available beyond those provided by sponsors?
- C.4 How is cultural orientation treated?
- C.5 Addressing settlement needs in alignment with settlement service providers
- C.6 What arrangements are made for housing?
- C.7 How is job searching and training treated?
- C.8 How is education treated?
- C.9 How is language treated?
- C.10 How are physical, mental, and dental health treated?

C.1 WHAT SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION 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 with respect to settlement and integration needs involved in community sponsorship.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- i. What settlement supports need to be considered in terms of cost?
- ii. Who bears the costs of settlement support services?
- iii. 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, "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: identifying needs, 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;
- Language training;
- Interpretation;
- Education for children and adults;
- Skills training;
- Education and professional credentials assessment;
- Income assistance and financial planning;
- Employment counselling;
- Physical health and dental services;
- Mental health support and trauma counselling;
- Legal assistance;
- Community orientation and navigation of transportation networks (and potentially costs of vehicle if refugees are eager to drive);
- Recreational activities; and
- Cultural orientation.

Details regarding associated costs and responsibilities are included throughout this chapter, where each of these aspects of settlement and integration will be addressed. This segment provides a brief overview of costs and financial responsibilities.

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. Since April 2017, the Government of Canada has expanded Interim Federal Health Program coverage to refugees overseas to cover the costs of their medical exams. Refugees may be charged for costs of credential assessment, some non-urgent dental care, and must pay tuition for post-secondary education. Other community organizations and municipalities may cover the costs of additional and/or supplementary services to admitted refugees.

DETAIL

SPONSORING GROUPS are responsible for providing start-up funds 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 12 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, job-related services, and referrals to other supports in the community. The Government of Canada covers the costs of language training through its Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada program.

PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS cover the costs of health care and public primary and secondary education. Provinces/territories also fund a variety of settlement support services and organizations.

REFUGEES may be charged for costs of foreign educational and professional credentials assessment. Additionally, they must pay tuition if they choose to pursue post-secondary education. Since April 2017, the costs of their medical examinations are covered under Canada's Interim Federal Health Program, which previously was the refugees' responsibility.

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.

RESOURCES

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>

Canadian Council for Refugees, "Transportation loans!"
<http://ccrweb.ca/en/transportation-loans>

(iii) FOR COSTS BORNE BY SPONSORED REFUGEES, ARE THERE ANY PROGRAMS TO COVER THESE COSTS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

To alleviate financial burdens on refugees, some organizations may also offer grants or frequent flyer points to cover a variety of costs for refugees such as 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

Typically, sponsoring groups need to reach out to organizations that offer grants or points to support costs, so their sponsored refugees can 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.

RESOURCES

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/>

C.2 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 admitted refugees. Legal statuses have implications on the success of integration and access to important services.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- i.** What legal status do refugees have upon arrival in their country of resettlement?
- ii.** What rights and obligations flow from admitted 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 migration officer will issue a permanent resident visa to Canada. When refugees arrive in Canada, a border services officer at the port of entry verifies their documentation.

In exceptional cases, overseas migration officers may issue temporary resident permits where circumstances do not permit full medical and security screening before arrival to Canada. In these cases, processing for permanent residence is completed after refugees arrive in Canada.

DETAIL

Refugees approved by overseas migration offices for resettlement to Canada will receive a permanent resident visa to travel. When they arrive in Canada, a border services officer at the port of entry will ask to examine 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. Thus, they have permanent resident status upon arrival in Canada.

Refugees can choose to remain permanent residents indefinitely so long as they continue to meet the requirements

to maintain permanent residence. They may also apply for Canadian citizenship upon meeting requirements. It is also possible for refugees to renounce permanent residence or for their status to be revoked.

In the United Kingdom, Indefinite Leave to Remain is granted on arrival, and arrangements are made for Biometric Residence Permits to be issued. In Italy, as outlined in Chapter 3 of this Guidebook, refugees are initially granted humanitarian admission.

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Understand permanent resident status"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/about-pr.asp>

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"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/permanent-residence/protected-persons/stage-2-admissibility.html>

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 the right to enter Canada, 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:

- Right to enter Canada;
- 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, upon meeting the requirements under the Citizenship Act; 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 Resident 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 citizenship) or for their status to be revoked. 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>

(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, with no unfulfilled conditions related to that Permanent Resident status.
- **TIME LIVED IN CANADA:** Applicants must be physically present in Canada for three out of five years before applying for citizenship.
- **INCOME TAX FILING:** Applicants may need to file their personal income tax in three taxation years within the five years before they apply for citizenship.
- **LANGUAGE ABILITIES:** Applicants between 18 and 54 years must demonstrate adequate knowledge of either French or English.
- **KNOWLEDGE OF CANADA:** Applicants between 18 and 54 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.
- **FREE OF PROHIBITIONS:** Applicants must not be under a removal order or prohibited on criminal or security grounds. 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.

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Apply for citizenship: Who can apply"

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

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 the ground(s) for revoking their status, and generally they have a right to appear for a hearing with the Immigration and Refugee Board. Resettled refugees may lose permanent residence status because:

- They have failed to meet residency requirements to maintain permanent resident status; and/or
- They are inadmissible to Canada on grounds of security, human and international rights violations, serious criminality, organized criminality, and misrepresentation.

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 enter Canada, vote, hold public office, and hold jobs that require a high level of security clearance.

DETAIL

Permanent residents can only lose their status through one of these official processes:

- The refugee has been living outside Canada too long and does not meet the residency obligation under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act;
- The refugee's protection status has ceased;
- Refugees voluntarily renounce their permanent resident status;
- A removal order made against the refugees 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 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.

There are also two ways that refugee protection can be removed:

- A person can cease to hold their refugee status if they voluntarily re-avail themselves of the protection of their country of nationality or obtain protection from another country (citizenship).
- A person can have their refugee status vacated if they obtained that status by directly or indirectly misrepresenting or withholding material facts relating to a relevant matter.

The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act allows for loss of permanent residence status if refugee protection ceases under sections A108(1)(a) to (d) and if there is a finding of inadmissibility under A40.1. There is no loss of permanent residence status if refugee protection is removed because of a change in country conditions [A108(1)(e)].

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Understand permanent resident status"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/about-pr.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>

Government of Canada, Immigration and Refugee Protection Act

A108
<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-2.5/section-108.html>

A109
<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-2.5/section-109.html>

A140
<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-2.5/section-40.html>

IRCC, "Examples of misrepresentation in the resettlement context"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/admissibility/examples-misrepresentation.html>

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.3 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:

- i. What services may refugees require that sponsoring groups cannot reasonably provide?
- ii. What are the conditions to access other services?
- iii. How are women's distinct needs met?

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/>

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; counselling 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 non-financial settlement 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 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 help connect sponsored refugees with settlement agencies in their communities, as outlined in their Settlement Plan.

RESOURCES

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>

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
<https://isans.ca/home/>

OCISO
<https://ociso.org/>

MOSAIC
<https://www.mosaicbc.org/>

Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI)
<http://tcri.qc.ca/>

(ii) 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 available to other Canadians, including healthcare and education, as well as specialized supports for 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 until they qualify for provincial or territorial insurance (usually to 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 12 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, which 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 - for example, Canadian Dentists for Refugees.

COUNSELLING SERVICES: Under the IFHP, resettled refugees can access services provided by allied healthcare practitioners including clinical psychologists, psychotherapists, counselling therapists, social workers, 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.

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/territorially-funded.

RESOURCES

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

IRCC, "Settlement Program"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/program-terms-conditions/settlement.html>

Legal Aid Ontario, "Types of help"
<http://www.legalaid.on.ca/en/getting/typesofhelp.asp>

Legal Aid Ontario, "Will Legal Aid pay for my lawyer?"
<http://www.legalaid.on.ca/en/getting/eligibility.asp>

(iii) HOW ARE WOMEN'S DISTINCT NEEDS MET?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

It is important that sponsors and refugees are apprised of services available to refugees should they encounter gender-based violence, and, more generally, that sponsors are aware of services to help address women's distinct needs. This can be built into sponsor training and settlement planning.

Canada's refugee resettlement program offers protection to at-risk women and girls through each of its three refugee streams (Government-Assisted Refugees, Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugees, and Privately Sponsored Refugees).

The Government of Canada recognizes the significant contributions that newcomer women make to the economic, social, civic, and cultural life of Canada, and their key role in the settlement and integration of the family unit. Migration to Canada can bring many opportunities for women, but can also include distinct and multiple challenges such as navigating a new language, work transitions, family and childcare responsibilities, developing new networks, and shifts in family dynamics. To address these challenges and advance gender equality for refugee and immigrant women, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC's) Settlement Program funds a range of targeted settlement services.

DETAILS

These targeted services include employment supports and mentoring, peer networks and social activities, information and orientation on rights and responsibilities in Canada, women's-only employment and language supports, and family and gender-based violence supports. In addition, child-minding and transportation services are offered to ensure that women, who are often the ones primarily responsible for child and family care, are able to access these settlement integration services.

In support of Canada's resettlement of Syrian refugees, the Government of Canada's federal Immigration department funded enhancements to support the unique settlement needs of Syrian refugee women. These included additional peer network and conversation circles specifically for women to establish valuable social connections, learn about available community supports, practice their new language skills, and reduce isolation.

The Government of Canada also offers special protection specifically to women and girls at risk through the Assistance to Women at Risk (AWR) refugee resettlement program, established in 1988. This program, recognizing that refugee women face particular risks, provides expedited protection to women who are in critical need, as well as additional settlement support services upon arrival in Canada.

The AWR program is available both to government-assisted and privately sponsored refugees. It is designed to offer resettlement opportunities to women and girls in dangerous situations where local authorities cannot ensure their safety and who are at increased risk of violence, discrimination, and marginalization. The program is dedicated to protecting women experiencing gender-based violence such as persecution, harassment, abduction, rape, or sexual abuse, including female heads of households and families where females are the majority. Some women may need immediate protection, while others are in permanently unstable circumstances.

Under Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, government-assisted refugees must be referred to Canada by designated referral organization - typically the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Referral organizations can attach the Women at Risk designation to

relevant cases they are referring to Canada. Alternatively, AWR cases may be identified by the Canadian migration officer reviewing the case. If the applicant in an AWR case is in urgent need of protection, their processing is expedited and they are exempt from the normal requirement to demonstrate an ability to establish themselves in Canada in the short to medium term. Furthermore, if the case qualifies, cases may be referred to the Joint Assistance Sponsorship program, which provides refugees with additional settlement support for up to 24 months, provided jointly by the Government and private sponsors.

ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence disproportionately impacts women and many settlement service provider organizations (SPOs) across Canada deliver programming in the area of violence prevention. SPOs have strong community partnerships in place with local transition houses, police, and key emergency services to ensure holistic programming for victims and survivors of abuse. SPOs provide culturally and linguistically appropriate counselling and offer support groups that help newcomer women obtain relevant information and understand the cycle of abuse. They assist clients with developing safety plans and building confidence, obtaining medical and social services, and navigating the legal system. Other prevention activities include needs assessments, awareness and education about gender-based violence, and women's only language classes.

Through a 2019 Call for Proposals for the Settlement Program, IRCC requested an expansion and customization of services to respond to specific client needs. Customized services prioritized gender specific programming that takes into account the multiplicity of responsibilities and roles of newcomer women. This includes flexible scheduling of activities; place-based services such as the home or local community centres; integrated support services such as providing childcare so women can attend training; leadership and wellness education; support for victims of gender-based violence and information on the legal system in Canada; and services that use recreational activities to create non-stigmatizing opportunities for dialogue on sensitive topics and to develop healthy perspectives on gender roles and relationships.

Under Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-based Violence, in Budget 2017, IRCC received funding for five years to further enhance its Settlement Program. This funding is being used to implement a settlement sector strategy on gender-based violence through a coordinated partnership of settlement and anti-violence sector organizations, with information, training and resources available online. IRCC also offers resources on gender-based violence, including the free, multi-lingual guide 'Abuse is wrong in any language'.

RESOURCES

RSTP, Sexual Harassment:

<https://www.rstp.ca/en/infosheet/sexual-harassment-2/>

UN Women, "Women at Risk Program"

<https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/americas/canada/na/women-at-risk-program>

Government of Canada, "Gender-Based Violence Knowledge Centre"

<https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-violence-knowledge-centre.html>

Gender-Based Violence Settlement Sector Strategy Project:

<https://www.ngbv.ca/>

IRCC, "Help for Spouses or Partners who are victims of abuse: Resources"

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/family-sponsorship/abuse.html#resources>

C.4 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:

- i. What post-arrival 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. 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>

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 POST-ARRIVAL 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, which were discussed in detail in earlier chapters.

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 of Canada.

DETAIL

The settlement services sponsors undertake to help refugees adjust to life in Canada are central in providing orientation. Through their day-to-day interactions with sponsored refugees, sponsors provide opportunities for cross-cultural exchange and understanding.

Sponsors also 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 sponsored refugees have family members or friends 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.

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 of Canada. They also connect refugees with other services promoting orientation that support their integration. 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 making referrals to other community based organizations with expertise in issues such as gender-based violence; and being aware of and challenging assumptions).

Local settlement workers are available to help refugees adapt to all aspects of life in Canada, including language training, housing, education, health care. 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)).

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.

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 facilitate recreational activities and community-building events for refugees. Cultural and diaspora organizations also offer orientation, information, accompaniment, cultural supports, and 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>

(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 approach to 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.

Refugee integration into Canadian society is supported through education, employment, language acquisition, and cross-cultural understanding as well as 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, honour 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 as well as develop their own social networks.

Orientation must involve two-way cross-cultural communications and adaptations 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) 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 provide 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, members of the LGBTQ2 community, newcomers with a disability, and seniors, recognizing that targeted interventions are needed to improve integration outcomes for population groups that experience greater marginalization, discrimination, and violence.

A number of organizations have prepared orientation resources and sessions for refugees and other newcomers. These resources often make reference to considerations for different population groups within the community, such as women, as well as the barriers they may experience accessing services, such as needing childcare in order to participate in language classes. 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, members of the LGBTQ2 community, newcomers with a disability, and seniors, recognizing that targeted interventions are needed to improve integration outcomes for population groups that experience greater marginalization, discrimination, and violence:

Programming for newcomer youth includes mentoring, leadership training, social connections activities, and employment supports and skills development. Settlement Workers in Schools places settlement workers from community agencies in schools across Canada.

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, digital literacy sessions to help seniors connect with friends and families as well as settlement services, and workshops on elder abuse, including family and gender-based violence. They also include information on seniors' rights, health and wellness, housing options, budgeting, the Canadian Pension Plan and other available benefits.

Ethno-cultural and diaspora organizations also provide support to specific immigrant communities and groups within those communities.

RESOURCES

Immigrant Services Society of BC, *A New Start: Refugee Youth Pre-Departure Orientation Pilot Program*

https://issbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/14_-_a-new-start-sept_2011.pdf

Social Planning Council of Ottawa, *"Best Practices In Supporting the Integration of Immigrant Families Through Small Ethno-cultural Organizations"*

<http://www.cims-scic.ca/sites/all/files/pdf/2010/Publications/Best-Practices-Supporting-Immigrant-Families-English.pdf>

Calgary Immigrant Woman's Association, *"CIWA ready to serve Syrian refugee women and children"*

<https://ciwa-online.com/component/acymailing/listid-2/mailid-46-ciwa-monthly-newsletter-october-2015.html>

IRCC, *"Helping vulnerable Yazidi women and children and other survivors of Daesh"*

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2017/02/helping-vulnerable-yazidi-women-and-children-and-other-survivors-of-daesh.html>

Centre for Immigrant & Community Services, *"Seniors"*

<http://www.cicscanada.com/content/50/Seniors>

C.5 ADDRESSING SETTLEMENT NEEDS IN ALIGNMENT WITH SETTLEMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

While sponsors provide settlement support to newly arrived refugees, many of the services they provide are closely aligned to those also provided by designated service providing organizations.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- i.** How can refugees' needs be formally assessed?
- ii.** How can sponsors effectively collaborate with other integration-related service providers?

(i) HOW CAN REFUGEES' SETTLEMENT NEEDS BE FORMALLY ASSESSED?

THE NEEDS AND REFERRALS SERVICES

SUMMARY

In addition to sponsors, the Government of Canada funds a network of settlement agencies across the country (except in Quebec) that can provide support to sponsors and refugees looking for housing and other settlement services. Through its Settlement Program, the Government of Canada funds organizations to provide programming such as Needs and Assets Assessment and Referral Services (NAARS) to formally identify client needs and connect them to available supports.

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Needs and Assets Assessment and Referral Services (NAARS) is central to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC's) efforts to empower clients and their accompanying family members to take a more active role in planning their settlement path. Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) who are funded by IRCC to provide NAARS activities meet with the client (either a Permanent Resident, Refugee or Protected Person) and their family unit and together identify their settlement needs and the assets that they bring (knowledge, skills, abilities and life experiences), which will inform their personalized Settlement Plan. The plan will consist of realistic timelines for achieving settlement objectives along with referrals to IRCC-funded and community services.

DETAIL

NAARS is not mandatory for clients, however, it is strongly recommended for the client's successful integration into Canadian society. It should take place at the earliest possible opportunity either at pre-arrival or soon after the client's arrival in Canada (to be completed within three months of arrival). Clients who will receive services offered under IRCC's Settlement Program and, in particular clients who face multiple barriers, should complete a Needs and Assets Assessment with referrals identified in their personalized Settlement Plan.

NAARS is to be delivered to clients in person, if possible. A staff member(s) of the SPO should meet with the client with their family unit either pre-arrival and/or upon arrival to Canada. The process involves a "conversation" (or multiple conversations, if needed) with the client and their families to assist them in understanding the settlement process in Canada, consider their settlement needs and objectives, identify the unique assets (strengths) they bring, and identify actions for the client and their family to take to successfully build a life in Canada, which are recorded in their Settlement Plan.

RESOURCES

Needs and Assets Assessment and Referral Services (NAARS)
<http://cicintranet.ci.gc.ca/connexion/about-apropos/program/gc-sc/documents/pdf/naars-icare-guide-sebaa-iedec-eng.pdf>

(ii) HOW CAN SPONSORS EFFECTIVELY COLLABORATE WITH OTHER INTEGRATION-RELATED SERVICE PROVIDERS?

SUMMARY

The settlement and integration supports facilitated by sponsors are often also provided by designated organizations.

In Canada, there are federally-funded Service Provider Organizations who deliver resettlement assistance to Government-Assisted Refugees (not Privately Sponsored Refugees), as well as many Service Provider Organizations who provide general settlement and integration assistance. There are of course also many other service providing organizations not explicitly connected to refugee integration, but very relevant to the process of integration.

Sometimes an overlap or uncertainty in responsibilities or scope for support to refugee newcomers can occur. Who is best placed to facilitate particular aspects of refugees' resettlement might be an ongoing question in newly arrived refugee and sponsors' minds as they journey through the initial settlement and integration period.

DETAIL

From 2018 to 2021, IRCC funded a project - Allies in Refugee Integration - that provides excellent insight into how to address these questions. The project sought to increase and strengthen the collaboration between service providers and refugee sponsors in the province of Ontario. The project provided recommendations that could result in improved collaboration between sponsors and service providers, resulting in more successful integration of refugees. More information is provided in the link below.

RESOURCES

Allies in Refugee Integration:

<https://welcomeontario.ca/en/allies-for-refugee-integration-ari>

C.6 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:

- 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 pays for sponsored refugees' accommodations?
- iv.** Are government housing supplements available to sponsored refugees?
- v.** Do refugees have autonomy in choosing where to live?
- vi.** Do refugees have the right to sign leases?
- vii.** How can private landlords be engaged to provide affordable housing to sponsored refugees?
- viii.** What type of housing is appropriate for refugees?

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Welcome to Canada: What you should know" <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/publication-welcome-canada-what-you-should-know.html>

RSTP, "Orientation Guide and Resources" <http://www.rstp.ca/en/sponsorship-responsibilities/settlement-services/orientation-resources-guides/>

Refugee 613, "Housing FAQ" <http://www.refugee613.ca/pages/housing>

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "The Newcomer's Guide to Canadian Housing" <https://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/NH15-323-1999E.pdf>

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, or community-based initiatives focused on housing for refugees. This is an example of ways communities can engage in welcoming refugees beyond sponsorship, and settlement agencies and sponsors can ensure alignment across the support they provide to newly arrived sponsored refugees.

RESOURCES

Settlement.Org, "First Days in Ontario: A Guide to Your First Two Weeks in Ontario"
http://settlement.org/downloads/First_Days_Guide_EN.pdf

(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 integrating into Canadian society while respecting the refugees' right to dignity and autonomy. Sponsors should explain the refugees' budget for 12 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. Sponsors should remember, however, that some cultures are offended by receiving used goods and should be sensitive to how the refugee may react to used goods and receiving items without including them in the decision making process.

RESOURCES

Refugee 613, "Housing FAQ"
<http://www.refugee613.ca/pages/housing>

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "The Newcomer's Guide to Canadian Housing"
<https://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/NH15-323-1999E.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/>

(iii) 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 12 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 (or a portion of the funds, in the case of blended models), they should remember that their role is to assist refugees in becoming self-sufficient and in integrating into Canadian society while respecting the refugees' right to dignity 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 migration officers to extend sponsorship to a total of 36 months before refugees' arrival. 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/territorial 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.

RESOURCES

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>

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "The Newcomer's Guide to Canadian Housing"
<https://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/NH15-323-1999E.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/>

(iv) ARE GOVERNMENT HOUSING SUPPLEMENTS AVAILABLE TO COMMUNITY 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, they may access provincial/territorial and municipal housing supplements or subsidies. The available supports depend on the province/territory 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/territorial 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 the availability of and access to these housing options for refugees who are not yet self-sufficient, those experiencing homelessness, 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-g 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/territory; 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/territorial 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 a government housing supplement.

RESOURCES

Refugee 613, "Housing FAQ"

<http://www.refugee613.ca/pages/housing>

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "The Newcomer's Guide to Canadian Housing"

<https://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/NH15-323-1999E.pdf>

Settlement.org, "What is subsidized housing"

<http://settlement.org/ontario/housing/subsidized-housing/subsidized-housing/what-is-subsidized-housing/>

(v) 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 community 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.

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, and schools.

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 – for example, family or community ties in another part of the country or lack of employment opportunities. If the refugees relocate, the current sponsoring group may endeavour to find a replacement sponsoring group for the refugees in their new communities of settlement. If new sponsors cannot be found and a sponsorship breakdown is declared by the Government of Canada, refugees are able to access, depending on the circumstances, federal or provincial/territorial or municipal income support until they become self-sufficient.

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.

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Guide 5413 – Sponsorship Agreement Holders to privately sponsor refugees"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides/guide-sponsor-refugee-agreement-holder-constituent-group.html>

IRCC, "Understand permanent resident status"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/about-pr.asp>

(vi) 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 states: “[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.”

Despite this legislation, overt and covert discrimination in Canada continues to exist and can be a barrier to housing for all streams of newcomers, including refugees. Having sponsors act as an ally when searching for accommodation is therefore vital.

RESOURCES

Ontario Human Rights Code
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19>

(vii) 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

Challenges with obtaining both rental and permanent housing has been a longstanding issue in Canada, with shortages of affordable, available, and appropriate housing for both Canadians and newcomers.

To assist with this issue, some landlords in many cities in Canada have come forward to assist with permanent housing for refugees, including in response to public calls to address housing shortages. This was particularly in the context of the Syrian refugee crisis. Non-profit organizations also work as advocates on housing issues and actively engage landlords, settlement agencies, and municipalities.

RESOURCES

Refugee 613, "Housing FAQ"
<http://www.refugee613.ca/pages/housing>

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%20Office/2017/01/Syrian%20Refugee%20Resettlement.pdf>

City of Toronto, "City of Toronto Resettlement Program"
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2015/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-83896.pdf>

(viii) 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 phone numbers 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, for example, 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 (if the refugees desire) and appropriate supports such as medical facilities, trauma counseling, 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.

C.7 HOW IS JOB SEARCHING AND TRAINING TREATED?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider strategies to assist sponsored refugees in accessing the job market and becoming self-sufficient.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- 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>

YMCA-YWCA National Capital, "Newcomer Information Centre: Employment & Immigrant Services" <https://www.ymcaywca.ca/employment-immigrant-services/immigrant-services/newcomer-information-centre/>

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" <https://keys.ca/immigrants/resettlement.php>

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 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 of 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/territories provide employers incentives or subsidies to hire people at risk, including refugees.

RESOURCES

Lifeline Syria, "Sponsorship Handbook"
<http://lifelinesyria.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/LSSponsorHandbookFeb2016Final.pdf>

(ii) WHO PROVIDES EMPLOYMENT-RELATED SERVICES TO REFUGEES? WHAT TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT-RELATED SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) funds employment-related services for refugees through settlement agencies. As permanent residents, privately sponsored refugees are eligible to receive settlement services – including employment-related services – at no cost. Employment-related services can include labour market access supports such as: networking, mentorship, work placements, and preparation for the credential assessment process to help refugees find employment in Canada.

Other organizations, colleges and universities, professional associations, provincial/territorial training providers, and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may also provide settlement services, as well as other more general employment services, including skills and training supports.

DETAIL

Local IRCC-funded settlement service provider organizations provide a range of employment-related services, which may be targeted for specific clients (e.g., women, youth), including:

- **EMPLOYMENT COUNSELING:** identifying short- and long-term career goals; developing individualized career plans; researching alternative careers; and providing assistance in professional licensing;
- **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; essential skills training; and
- **OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT WITH EMPLOYERS:** facilitating work placements; professional mentorships and networking opportunities; career fairs and recruitment opportunities.

Private sponsors should also support the refugees they have sponsored in finding employment.

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, “Find free newcomer services near you”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/services/index.asp>

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. Sponsors can also connect with settlement agencies to ensure that the services they are providing are complementary and in alignment, as detailed prior to this segment.

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. 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, to assist them in finding work. Connecting with local settlement agencies will help sponsored refugees access various workshops, training sessions, counseling, and volunteer/mentorship/employment opportunities to help secure employment.

Sponsors can also support the labour market integration of refugees. This includes providing the following assistance: helping sponsored refugees prepare 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 to find work. Sponsors should encourage employers 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, for example, 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. 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 12 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, "What kinds of help do privately sponsored refugees get 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>

IRCC, "Before services"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/before-services.asp>

IRCC, "Prepare for arrival - Refugees resettling to Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/arriving.asp>

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 12 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. 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.

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 which 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/territorial income assistance until they or their family member(s) are able to secure employment in Canada.

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Do kinds of help do privately sponsored refugees get 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"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/program-terms-conditions/settlement.html>

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 and Case Management"
<https://isans.ca/program/employment-counselling-and-case-management/>

Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization, "Find a Job"
<https://ociso.org/find-a-job/>

MOSAIC, "Employment"
<https://www.mosaiccbc.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.

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 employment-related supports to help overcome some of these challenges. 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.

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, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, disability, and conviction for an offense 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 offense, 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/territories provide employers incentives or subsidies to hire people at risk, 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>

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>

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.8 HOW IS EDUCATION TREATED?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider how refugee children and adults will access education.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- 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.** Who covers tuition and other education expenses?
- vii.** What support systems and resources are in place for teachers in classes with refugee students?
- viii.** What barriers to education do admitted refugees face and how can curriculums and approaches to education be tailored to meet their needs?
- ix.** What can schools do to welcome refugees?
- x.** 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>

World Education Services
<https://www.wes.org/ca/>

British Columbia Ministry of Education, "Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers and Schools"
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/diverse-student-needs/students-from-refugee-backgrounds-guide.pdf>

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>

IRCC, "Learn about education in Canada"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/enrol-school.html>

IRCC, "Education in Canada: Life in Canadian schools"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/enrol-school/student-life.html>

IRCC, "Education in Canada: Post-secondary"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/enrol-school/post-secondary.html>

Employment and Social Development Canada, "Student aid and education planning"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/post-secondary.html>

Government of Canada, "Student aid"
<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, "Education funding"
<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 16 or 18 (depending on the Canadian province/territory), 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 16 or 18, depending on the province/territory, 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 the 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. Sponsors may play a role in facilitating these connections for the newly arrived refugee family.

RESOURCES

Care for Newcomer Children
<http://cmascanada.ca/>

Caring for Kids New to Canada, "Community Resources Serving Immigrant and Refugee Families"
<http://www.kidsnewtocanada.ca/beyond/resources>

Options Community Services, "First Steps Early Years Settlement Program"
<https://www.options.bc.ca/program/first-steps-early-years-settlement-program>

(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 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

[Settlement.org, "Adult Education"](http://settlement.org/ontario/education/adult-education/)
<http://settlement.org/ontario/education/adult-education/>

Canadian Centre for International Credentials, "Find an educational institution"
<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/publications/reports/adult-refugees-and-newcomers-inner-city-winnipeg>

[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/)
<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 16 or 18 (depending on the province/territory) 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. Postsecondary institutions charge tuition, which varies by province/territory, and by 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 18 in Ontario, New Brunswick, Nunavut, and Manitoba, and until the age of 16 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 implemented by the Toronto District School Board, or the Literacy, English and Academic Development 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 the 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

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"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/partners-service-providers/immigrant-serving-organizations/best-practices/foreign-educational-credential-assessment.html>

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, "GED - High School Equivalency"
<https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/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/>

(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/territorial 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 approaches that allow individuals to identify, document, and gain recognition for their prior learning which may be formal, informal, or experiential.

RESOURCES

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, "Find free newcomer services near you"

<https://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/services/index.asp>

IRCC, "Educational Credential Assessment - Service Providers"

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/partners-service-providers/immigrant-serving-organizations/best-practices/foreign-educational-credential-assessment.html>

World Education Services "WES Gateway Program"

<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"

<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/>

IRCC, "Pre-Arrival Services: Prepare to work in Canada"

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/pre-arrival-services/prepare-work.html>

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/territorial 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 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/>

World Education Services, "Fees"
<http://www.wes.org/ca/eca/fees/>

(vi) WHO COVERS TUITION AND OTHER EDUCATION EXPENSES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Primary and secondary education is publicly funded by Canadian provinces/territories 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/territorial financial assistance through loans, grants, bursaries, and scholarships.

DETAIL

Primary and secondary education is publicly funded by Canadian provinces/territories 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).

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/territorial 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 in 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

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?"
<https://www.newyouth.ca/en/resources/immigration/refugees/can-i-apply-osap-refugee>

Scholarships Canada
<http://www.scholarshipscanada.com/>

[Settlement.org](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/), "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/>

(vii) WHAT SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND RESOURCES ARE IN PLACE FOR TEACHERS IN CLASSES WITH REFUGEE STUDENTS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) initiative is focused on addressing newness to Canada as a barrier to school success. SWIS workers are culturally competent and trained to assist with system navigation; they provide in-school and online supports for newcomer students, including refugees. SWIS workers also act as liaisons and help to assist families and 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 English as a Second Language (ESL) Literacy Network is an online community that provides resources and information for English as 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/territorial level, so curriculum, policy and resources vary by province/territory. Some school boards and individual schools have developed tools and resources to assist teachers in classes with refugee students.

SWIS provides outreach to newcomer families whose children are enrolled in school. SWIS provides needs and assets 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"

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/diverse-student-needs/students-from-refugee-backgrounds-guide.pdf>

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>

SWIS in Saskatchewan

<https://swissask.ca/>

Thames Valley District School Board, "Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)" <https://www.tvdsb.ca/en/students/settlement-workers-in-schools.aspx>

MOSAIC, "Settlement Workers in Schools"

<https://www.mosaicbc.org/services/family-children-youth/settlement-workers-schools/>

(viii) WHAT BARRIERS TO EDUCATION DO ADMITTED 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 admitted 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 behaviours of other students to ensure that new students experience a welcoming environment and are not subject to bullying or harassment. Sponsors may wish to help facilitate these conversations and connect parents to appropriate contacts in schools.

DETAIL

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 have partnered with service provider organizations and the Government of Canada to offer Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) programming that supports school staff, students, and parents in empowering refugee students to succeed. SWIS also supports successful integration outcomes by connecting families with relevant community supports outside of the classroom.

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. For example, in Quebec, refugee children attend specialized classes to improve language skills before attending regular school.

Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) programming is offered at approximately 3,000 locations across Canada. SWIS supports students, school staff, and parents in learning about and adjusting to the school environment, and empowering students to succeed.

RESOURCES

British Columbia Ministry of Education, "Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers and Schools"

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/diverse-student-needs/students-from-refugee-backgrounds-guide.pdf>

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>

SWIS in Saskatchewan

<https://swissask.ca/>

Thames Valley District School Board "Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)";

<https://www.tvdsb.ca/en/students/settlement-workers-in-schools.aspx>

MOSAIC, "Settlement Workers in Schools"

<https://www.mosaicbc.org/services/family-children-youth/settlement-workers-schools/>

(ix) 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, like the 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/territories across Canada leveraged the work of community agencies including settlement organizations to provide services targeted to students and their families. Some 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 (SWIS), 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.

Sponsors can play an important role in orienting newly arrived families to the services and contacts available to support their children's integration in school, as well as facilitating interpretation if needed.

RESOURCES

Teaching Refugees with Limited Formal Schooling
<http://teachingrefugees.com/student-background/canadas-refugees/>

Catholic Principals' Council Ontario, "An Educator's Guide to Welcoming Syrian Refugee Children"
(*The Education Leader*, 28 September 2016)
https://cpco.on.ca/files/4314/5252/2722/Welcoming_Syrian_Refugee_Children.pdf

(x) 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. Adults can also earn their high school diploma, enabling them to access post-secondary education.

For children, some provinces/territories have developed specialized programs to assist refugees and other newcomers to Canada. Several initiatives have emerged in various school boards and provinces/territories 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 and Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada. Local settlement service providers refer refugees to language assessment centres where refugees will be assessed for language proficiency and referred to classes in their community. Adult refugees lacking secondary school credentials may prepare for the General Educational Development 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/territorial 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 implemented by the Toronto District School Board, or the Literacy, English and Academic Development program implemented by the Calgary Board of Education, that focus on language, academic foundations, and orientation.
- The Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, which 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 to support refugee students, their parents, and school staff. Many schools have also hired interpreters to support refugee students.

RESOURCES

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, "GED - High School Equivalency"
<https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/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/>

Mothers Matter Center, "Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)"
<https://mothersmattercentre.ca/what-is-hippy/>

Mothers Matter Center, "HIPPY - Frequently Asked Questions"
<https://mothersmattercentre.ca/faq-hippy/>

IRCC, "Language classes funded by the Government of Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/language.asp>

C.9 HOW IS LANGUAGE TREATED?

WHY IS THIS AREA IMPORTANT?

Actors need to consider how sponsored refugees will access language training services.

CONSIDERATIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- i.** How important is language acquisition for long-term outcomes for admitted refugees?
- ii.** What requirements must sponsored refugees meet to enroll in language training classes?
- iii.** Are there language learning services geared toward 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>

YMCA Ottawa, "Language Assessment and Referral Centre"
<https://www.ymcaywca.ca/reopening-strategy/language-assessment-and-referral-centre/>

Government of Ontario, "Improve your English and French"
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/improve-your-english-and-french>

Quebec Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion, "French courses for immigrants "
<https://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/settle/french-courses.html>

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>

(i) HOW IMPORTANT IS LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FOR LONG-TERM OUTCOMES FOR ADMITTED 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, teachers, community members, and other sectors of society also helps refugees build important social and professional networks that contribute to successful integration. The 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 level 4 or higher.

RESOURCES

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

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, which in their case is their Confirmation of Permanent Residence (and photo identification). 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 have their own eligibility criteria.

RESOURCES

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

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 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 childcare 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 intermediate 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.

Sponsors also play a critical role in helping refugees learn the local language, as the sponsor-refugee relationship provides an informal forum for practicing and immersion. Together, sponsors and refugees may wish to place focus on this form of learning together, such as through a weekly conversation hour, or watching a movie together in the local language with subtitles.

RESOURCES

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, "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>

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/territorial 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 the Government of Canada.

Settlement agencies, community organizations, school boards, public libraries, as well as secondary and postsecondary institutions may also provide language instruction. These services are also funded by municipal and provincial/territorial governments.

Provincial/territorial 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 from the above service providers at no cost to them 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>

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

The federal and provincial/territorial governments cover the costs of language training and assessment. Language evaluation is handled by local settlement service providers, who will refer refugees to language assessment centres based on their English or French proficiency. Refugees can access these services at no cost to them or their sponsoring groups.

DETAIL

Local settlement service providers refer refugees to language assessment centres where refugees are assessed for language proficiency in all four skills - reading, writing, speaking, and listening - 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 results report and a recommendation for language classes.

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>

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>

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, "Language Assessment Referral Services"
<https://ymcagta.org/employment-and-immigrant-services/immigrant-services/language-assessment-and-referral-services>

(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 favour 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 individuals.

DETAIL

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.

Federally-funded settlement language programming includes 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.

Sponsors may encourage refugees to establish strong language skills before entering the job market. However, it is ultimately the sponsored refugee's decision on 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 in Canada"
<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>

(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 service providers also offer support services such as short-term counselling, and interpretation and translation services, as well as provisions for persons with disabilities such as visual aids (magnifiers, large print reading materials), speech devices such as teletypewriters, and non-prescription hearing aids (sound amplifiers).

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 are available for learners who cannot access in-person language services but may require minimum language levels.

To increase access to language instruction classes, the Government of Canada offers childcare and transportation subsidies in certain locations. Classes to accommodate people with special needs and distinct barriers to services (e.g., blind or partially sighted; deaf or hard of hearing; women; seniors; youth, members of the LGBTQ2 community) 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>

IRCC, "Language classes funded by the Government of Canada"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/live/language.asp>

C.10 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:

- 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"
<https://www.camh.ca/en/your-care/programs-and-services/new-beginnings-clinic-for-refugees>

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>

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/>

IRCC, "Learn about health care in Canada"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/health-care-card.html>

IRCC, "Health care in Canada: Find doctors and dentists"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/health-care-card/finding-doctor-dentist.html>

IRCC, "Healthcare in Canada: Stay healthy after you arrive"
<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"
<https://multiculturalmentalhealth.ca/consumer-information/newcomers/>

Multicultural Mental Health Resource Centre, "Find an interpreter"
<https://multiculturalmentalhealth.ca/services/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/>

(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, admitted 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/territorial health card, selecting a family physician and dentist, and connecting them to mental health and trauma counseling where necessary.

DETAIL

Sponsors undertake in their Settlement Plan to assist refugees in applying for provincial/territorial health care coverage and accessing other necessary health services. Sponsors should assist refugees in seeking medical services covered under the IFHP. Sponsors should be aware of any special health needs and research the available specialists to set up appointments once refugees arrive.

Admitted 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/territories 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 centers set up clinics at hotels and offered initial screening to prioritize health issues. Local health authorities and provinces/territories also organized transitional health services such as dental health clinics and catch-up vaccination programs.

Under the Settlement Program, Canada also funds third-party service provider organizations to deliver non-clinical mental health-related supports and provide community-based health information. Through this program, Canada supports capacity-building of service providers to help them respond to the needs of at-risk groups, particularly women, youth, seniors, and refugees.

RESOURCES

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.ccvv.org/>

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 Addiction and Mental Health, "Refugee Mental Health Project"
<https://www.porticonetwork.ca/web/rmhp/>

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; disability; chronic medical conditions including non-communicable diseases such as diabetes; and dental disease. While some health needs are immediately identifiable, others, for example 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 needs/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>

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 Addiction and Mental Health, "Refugee Mental Health Project"
<https://www.porticonetwork.ca/web/rmhp/>

The College of Family Physicians of Canada, "Refugee Health Care: Resources to Assist Family Physicians"
<https://www.cfpc.ca/en-ca/resources/health-care-delivery/refugee-health-care-resources-to-assist-family-phy>

(iii) WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR COVERING THE COSTS OF HEALTHCARE SERVICES FOR REFUGEES?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Upon arrival in Canada, admitted 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 limited and temporary coverage of basic benefits, prescription drugs and supplemental benefits. The Program is meant to serve as a bridge until refugees qualify for provincial/territorial public health insurance plans. As permanent residents, refugees are generally eligible for provincial/territorial healthcare coverage upon their arrival in Canada. Refugees can apply for provincial/territorial coverage immediately after arrival.

DETAIL

As permanent residents, refugees are eligible for provincial/territorial healthcare coverage upon their arrival in Canada. Refugees can apply for provincial/territorial coverage immediately after arrival.

The IFHP provides basic coverage to admitted refugees until the beneficiary qualifies for provincial or territorial health insurance (typically up to three months). Basic coverage includes services from medical doctors, registered nurses, hospital care in addition to laboratory, diagnostic, and ambulance services. The IFHP also includes 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 on public health grounds; 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 admitted refugees for as long as the refugee is under government or private sponsorship, with initial coverage being issued for 12 months upon arrival. This coverage may be extended for an additional 12 months, provided the refugee is receiving government or private sponsorship for the same period. Supplemental coverage includes services such as mental health counseling, limited vision care, urgent dental care, prescription drugs, assistive devices, and some medical equipment.

Admitted 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 might be 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/territories 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>

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](http://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 Paediatric 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-sectoral 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

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/>

The College of Family Physicians of Canada, "Refugee Health Care: Resources to Assist Family Physicians"
<https://www.cfpc.ca/en-ca/resources/health-care-delivery/refugee-health-care-resources-to-assist-family-phy>

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 counseling 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 been admitted 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.

Through the Settlement Program, Canada funds service provider organizations to deliver non-clinical health-related supports and provide community-based health information. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada-funded settlement-related health programming supports disease prevention, the promotion of healthy living and general health orientation.

Some hospitals - such as 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 at-risk families.

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Search IFHP Providers"
<https://ifhp.medaviebc.ca/en/providers-search>

Simplifying The Journey, "Helping newcomers navigate your complex organization"
<https://www.simplifyingthejourney.ca/>

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 interventions 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:

- 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

IRCC, “Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program”
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/index.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 non-financial 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 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. Sponsorship withdrawal is an uncommon experience in Canada.

If sponsoring groups are no longer able or willing to provide financial and non-financial 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 since the sponsorship agreement is between the Government of Canada and the SAH.

(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 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

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; or
- 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.

(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 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, 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 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 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 90 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)). If a Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) sponsorship is no longer viable, the refugee's case is converted back to the Government-Assisted Refugees stream of Canada's refugee resettlement program. As the refugee's application for permanent residence has already been approved and the refugee is deemed "travel-ready" before referral to the BVOR program, processing will continue at the Canadian migration office overseas.

(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 depend on the reasons for the sponsorship withdrawal. If the sponsoring group withdraws for acceptable reasons, Canada does not penalize them in their current and future undertakings. If the sponsoring groups withdraws for unacceptable reasons, 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

Earlier in this segment, a non-exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable reasons to withdraw a sponsorship application was presented.

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 refugee's application for resettlement to Canada through private sponsorship will be refused. If the sponsors withdraw from a Blended Visa-Officer Referral (BVOR) sponsorship, the refugee's application continues to be processed under the Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR) program.

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. In the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program, 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.

However, refugees matched with sponsors under the BVOR program are selected from the GAR pool and are essentially 'travel-ready'. If the sponsor withdraws and the sponsorship is no longer viable, the refugee's case continues to be processed under the GAR program as their application for permanent residence in Canada has already been approved and finalized.

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 be eligible for resettlement to Canada independently of one another (i.e. meet the eligibility and admissibility criteria discussed in early chapters of this Guidebook).

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. In the Blended Visa-Officer Referral program, typically the household with largest number of dependents would continue to be admitted by the sponsors that the family was matched with. The other (former) partner or spouse would be admitted under the Government Assisted Refugee program.

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:

- 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, "Managing Expectations"

<https://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/videos/managing-expectations/>

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

(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.

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, 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 if the option is available. 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 IRCC's Resettlement Services Assurance Team (RSAT), to trigger sponsorship dispute and potential breakdown procedures.

RESOURCES

RSTP, "Managing Expectations"

<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, "Best Practices for 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>

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 program officer will reach out to the sponsored person by phone in order to assess if there is a valid concern that requires additional follow up. The program 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 officer may initiate the case review process and provide the sponsor an opportunity to either demonstrate that they have been providing support to the refugee as per program requirements, or to resolve any outstanding gaps in financial and non-financial support to prevent a sponsorship breakdown. If outstanding financial and non-financial items are not met, and/or the parties cannot resolve the dispute, the officer may declare a sponsorship breakdown and determine which parties bear what responsibility for the breakdown, and make recommendations for the consequences of the breakdown.

DETAIL

Though sponsorship breakdowns are rare, the Government of Canada may find out about a sponsorship dispute from the sponsors, refugees, or local services organizations. 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 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 case review to assess whether the sponsors are fulfilling their financial and non-financial obligations towards the refugees and to ensure that the refugees are able to access the services they need.

If the dispute cannot be resolved, 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. 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 this process, a written record of all communications involving the Government of Canada should be maintained. A separate document with major decisions, facts, action items, etc. should be prepared and copied to all parties involved.

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, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Resettlement Services Assurance Team 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:

- 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

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 financial and non-financial settlement 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 admitted 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; or
- 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.

(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 may be 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. In the event of a sponsorship breakdown, sponsored refugees have the ability to apply for federal/provincial/territorial social assistance as they no longer have an active sponsorship.

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. 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.

In cases of sponsorship breakdowns, refugees will be referred to appropriate federal or provincial/territorial supports.

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).

(iii) WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REFUGEES IN CASE OF A SPONSORSHIP BREAKDOWN AFTER THEIR ARRIVAL?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

In the event of a sponsorship breakdown, the Government of Canada will connect refugees with the appropriate municipal, provincial/territorial or federal authorities.

Sponsorship breakdown does not affect the refugees' legal status as permanent residents in Canada, regardless of whether they are responsible for the breakdown.

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: If the Government of Canada declares a sponsorship breakdown, the sponsors are no longer expected to provide financial and non-financial settlement support to the refugees. Sponsored refugees will be referred to municipal or provincial/territorial social assistance programs. In exceptional cases, they may be 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/territorial social assistance.

(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 non-financial 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. 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:

- Canada expects sponsors to look for a replacement sponsoring group for the smaller household prior to declaring a sponsorship breakdown. It is expected that the refugees reasonably comply with efforts to find replacement sponsors.
- In the event of a sponsorship breakdown, sponsored refugees will be referred to municipal or provincial/territorial social assistance programs. In exceptional cases, they may be 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/territorial social assistance.

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:

- 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/>

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 12 months starting from the refugees' arrival in Canada or until the refugee becomes self-sufficient, whichever comes first. As of January 1, 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 migration officer will ask the sponsoring group to extend the sponsorship period to a maximum of 36 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' undertaking may be 24 to 36 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 24 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 12 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/territorial 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>

(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.

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

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/territorial 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.

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>

(iv) CAN SPONSORING GROUPS RENEW THEIR SPONSORSHIP UNDERTAKINGS?

HOW CANADA DOES IT

SUMMARY

Sponsorship undertakings generally last 12 months. After 12 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.

DETAIL

If sponsoring groups would like to sponsor more overseas refugees, they need to submit a new 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. However, Canada will still review a SAH's Settlement Plan before approving a sponsorship application.

(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. 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. 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 fulfil 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 fulfill 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. The Government of Canada could revoke approval of the sponsorship undertaking and the overseas visa office could 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:

- 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, “Sponsor your Relatives”

<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>

(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.

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.

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 admitted 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.

RESOURCES

IRCC, "Determining which family members are eligible for resettlement"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/eligibility/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 do not 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. 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. Admitted refugees may also apply for their dependants 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; and
- 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, 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, "Guide to Sponsor Parents and Grandparents"
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/5772ETOC.asp>

(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, and contribute funds. These plans should be clearly set out in writing in the sponsoring group's Settlement Plans that forms part of the sponsorship application.

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 cosponsor 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.

RESOURCES

RSTP, "Managing Expectations: A Resource Kit for Refugee Sponsors"
<http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/expecttool2013.pdf>

2.E EVALUATING THE PROGRAM OR PILOT'S SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES: A FOCUS ON SPAIN

Once a pilot or program has been designed and implemented, learning about its successes and areas for improvement is critical for future iterations, and for other programs around the world.

Spain has one such evaluation that can be learned from, both in terms of how it approached evaluation, as well as in terms of its findings. Recall that there are also strong learnings from New Zealand's approach to evaluation, and their evaluation findings, which were set out earlier in this Guidebook.

AUZOLANA II: COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP PILOT IN SPAIN, WITH EVALUATION APPROACH AND FINDINGS TO SHARE

The Auzolana II pilot is the first of three (at time of writing) community sponsorship pilots in Spain. These pilots are each undertaken by a sub-national governmental authority. The Basque Government in the Basque Country of Spain launched the Auzolana II pilot, welcoming 29 Syrian refugees to five municipalities in the region in March 2019. A highly comprehensive evaluation of the pilot was released in 2021. This evaluation approach, structure, and findings are valuable to policymakers around the world designing or improving their own community sponsorship programs or evaluation approaches. New and existing community sponsorship program designers are encouraged to read the evaluation in detail in order to benefit directly from both its strong approach to evaluation and its findings related to community sponsorship program development and implementation.

The summary below provides a brief synopsis of the evaluation itself, and the evaluation-related findings of the report.

The evaluation of the Auzolana II pilot was conducted by Instrategies, commissioned by the General Secretariat for Human Rights, Coexistence and Cooperation of the Basque Government in line with its leadership role in advancing the pilot. The evaluation focused on the design and implementation of the pilot, and shared lessons learned which can be of use to others exploring similar pilots in their regions or countries.

The evaluation examined 15 key questions that need to be considered in determining the success of a community sponsorship program (McNally 2020) - setting a conceptual framework for any community sponsorship evaluation undertaken, globally.

Through the formal agreement that established the Auzolana II pilot, the pilot's objectives, actors involved, and the governance mechanisms in place were all explicit and clear (see section 3.1 of the evaluation). This sets a strong foundation for what and how to evaluate.

EVALUATION APPROACH

- The objective of the evaluation was clearly defined: to identify positive aspects of the pilot, and areas for improvement – both for the benefit of the Auzolana II pilot itself, as well as other countries and regions.
- Stakeholders, their functions, and associated actions and resources were concisely mapped along the continuum of the sponsorship journey (see figure 2 in chapter 3 of the evaluation).
- Governance structures were identified.
- Three analyses were undertaken across the stages and stakeholders involved:
 1. The planning phase;
 2. The development phase; and
 3. The implementation and evaluation phase.

Extensive documentation (e.g., settlement plans, conclusions from the Auzolana I pilot) and supplementary information from other community sponsorship processes and evaluations, in-depth interviews, and working groups/meetings all supported this comprehensive evaluation approach.

OME OF THE FINDINGS AT EACH PHASE OF ANALYSIS, PARTICULARLY TO DO WITH MONITORING AND EVALUATION (see section 4 of the evaluation for detail):

- In the planning phase, the pilot's strengths included the Basque Government's explicit commitment to seek alternative admission and integration pathways for refugees, and the multi-level collaborative nature of the pilot. Areas for improvement centred on the pilot's lack of additionality, and limited national visibility – which limits its impact.
- The development phase again noted the clarity of well-defined stakeholder roles as one of the pilot's strengths. Many of the recommendations on areas of improvement and learning centred on monitoring and evaluation, including:
 1. Advising future programs on which stakeholders should enter into signed agreements and with whom, in order to be certain that supervision and monitoring of the process in its entirety can take place.
 2. Suggesting that in future, standardized instruments that enable monitoring and evaluation of settlement plans would be beneficial.
 3. Noting that monitoring and evaluation indicators for community sponsorship itself, and the actions involved in the implementation phase, be included in future pilots.
- In the implementation phase, mechanisms that enabled the sponsors to self-assess and identify challenges was a strength. Local coordination panels were deemed to be key, and recommended they be examined to determine how they can be made even more valuable in the future.
- In the implementation phase, a valuable model for understanding how the host society is engaged in the integration and inclusion phases was envisioned by the evaluators as a set of concentric circles, depicting those most explicitly engaged to the wider, less directly engaged context.

In its conclusion, the evaluation highlights the unique framework that Auzolana II has pioneered. Within the global community sponsorship space, the pilot has introduced new innovations and mechanisms for designing community sponsorship programs, along with expertise and strong practice in its approach to evaluation. The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative strongly encourages all involved in the development of community sponsorship programs to explore the Auzolana's II evaluation, learning both from its findings as well as its monitoring and evaluation approach as a whole.

RESOURCES

General Library of the Basque Government, "Auzolana II Community Sponsorship Experience, an Evaluation Report"

https://www.euskadi.eus/contenidos/informacion/babesletzakomunitarioa/eu_def/adjuntos/AUZOLANA-II-INFORME-EVALUACION-euskcastengl-.pdf

McNally, R. (2020). *The Blended Visa Office-Referred Program: Perspectives and Experiences from Rural Nova Scotia* in Labman, S. & Cameron, G. (ed.) *Strangers to Neighbours: Refugee Sponsorship in Context*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

<https://www.mqup.ca/strangers-to-neighbours-products-9780228001379.php>

3. CASE STUDIES, INTERVIEWS AND STORIES

- 3.A** COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP IN A RURAL COMMUNITY
- 3.B** A SYNAGOGUE'S EXPERIENCE SPONSORING REFUGEES OF ANOTHER FAITH
- 3.C** INNOVATIONS IN SPONSORSHIP-ASSISTED RESETTLEMENT: THE ITALIAN MODEL
- 3.D** STUDENTS HELPING STUDENTS THROUGH UNIQUE SETTLEMENT PROGRAMS
- 3.E** LESSONS LEARNED BY A LARGE SPONSORING GROUP
- 3.F** A SPONSORING ORGANIZATION THAT WELCOMES MEMBERS OF THE LGBTI COMMUNITY TO CANADA
- 3.G** ALL ABOUT SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT HOLDERS
- 3.H** THE EXPERIENCE OF A BUSINESS SPONSORING REFUGEES
- 3.I** TRAINING AND INFORMATION FOR REFUGEE SPONSORS IN CANADA
- 3.J** ORGANIZING SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT HOLDERS IN CANADA

3.A COMMUNITY 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; for example, 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 groups at risk 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.

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 honored 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

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

3.C INNOVATIONS IN SPONSOR-ASSISTED RESETTLEMENT: THE ITALIAN MODEL

HUMANITARIAN CORRIDORS

Humanitarian Corridors were launched in 2015 by the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy (FCEI), and the Waldesian Evangelical Church (CEV), and CEI-Caritas Italy. Italy was one of the first countries to launch the program, which sees these organizations and a growing number of others sign Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the Italian Ministries of the Interior and Foreign Affairs. MOUs are renewed on sponsors' request and permit the entry of pre-determined numbers of refugees from specific countries of asylum.

The agreements signed between civil society organizations and the Italian Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs allows the issuing of entry visas by Italian consulates; once refugees arrive they are able to apply for asylum under the Common European Asylum system. The organizations are responsible for identification and selection of candidates and carry out the pre-departure activities, arrange arrival in Italy, and provide support once they have arrived. These organizations also cover the costs of resettlement and provide training and support for sponsors. Upon arrival, newcomers are entitled to the same state-funded supports for language lessons, employment readiness, and other settlement assistance as any other asylum seekers, but in this case these services are provided by the civil society organizations.

Since its launch, the program has grown significantly and represents a very large number of admitted refugees. Over 3,000 persons in need of protection have been admitted to Italy through partnership between the Italian government and civil society organizations. So far, Humanitarian Corridors have been organized from Lebanon, Ethiopia, Niger, Libya and Jordan.

UNIVERSITY CORRIDORS AND OTHER PROGRAMMING

In Italy, the program has since grown to include a University Corridors program, termed "[UNI-CO-RE](#)", which welcomes refugees living in Ethiopia to Italian universities for a fully-funded Master's degree. Student participants in the UNICORE program are mainly Eritrean or Sudanese citizens who have refugee status in Ethiopia. From an initial cycle involving six refugee students at two universities in 2019, the UNICORE program has since placed over 70 students in 24 universities, including 45 students in the third cycle in 2021.

The program is implemented through ad hoc agreements, of three years' duration, between UNHCR, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), universities, and partners that support students in the logistic and transfer to Italy and in providing specific services for students in Italy (including legal and social counselling, psychosocial support, and material items such as a laptop and phone). These partners include Caritas Italiana, the Waldesian Board, Centro Astalli (the Italian branch of the Jesuit Refugee Service) and Gandhi Charity.

Progetto "Mediterraneo" is a project launched by Luiss University, in partnership with UNHCR. Luiss made available 20 full scholarships for refugee students in Jordan and Morocco. The first seven students arrived in Italy in September 2021 with a student visa to begin their academic education.

Project "Pagella in Tasca" is a project implemented by INTERSOS, in partnership with UNHCR and the Italian Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, and Labour, along with several other stakeholders, for the identification and transfer in Italy of unaccompanied and separated child refugees aged 16 and 17 currently in Niger in order to allow them to complete their education in Italy. Selected unaccompanied and separated children, most of whom come from the Darfur region, are transferred to Italy from Niger, entrusted to foster families selected by INTERSOS and social services, and

enrolled in Italian schools. Early experience with this integration model has been positive, and the MFA is available to renew the program in coming years.

Italy's resettlement commitments, as pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum, are monitored through the Global Compact on Refugees on a yearly basis.

HUMANITARIAN CORRIDORS AND COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

One of the key differences between the Humanitarian Corridors program and other community sponsorship programs and pilots is the absence of a legislative or other formal overarching framework. Each individual Corridor is governed by a separate agreement between the implementing organization(s) and the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs, and each agreement covers a specific number of refugees and country or countries of asylum. As such, individual implementing organizations do not have a standardized or centralized set of rules, regulations, or guidelines to follow in navigating sponsor training, finding housing, or any of the other key components of many community sponsorship programs. Despite the lack of framework, the Italian model has proven to be highly successful, resettling over 4,000 refugees – a figure which places it second only to Canada in the number of refugees admitted with community support – and developing a strong network of organizations and sponsors who share best practices and expertise in the service of improving the support they provide to newcomers.

FURTHER READING

UNICORE
<https://universitycorridors.unhcr.it/>

3.D 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://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. 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 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/territorial 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/>

WUSC, "How the SRP changed my life"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYo-6NzdRD8>

WUSC, "5 stories of belonging from former refugees in Canada"
<https://wusc.ca/5-stories-belonging-former-refugees-canada/>

WUSC, "Our Initiatives"
<https://wusc.ca/initiatives/>

3.E 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.F A SPONSORING ORGANIZATION THAT WELCOMES MEMBERS OF THE LGBTI 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 LGBTQ2 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 LGBTI 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-Referred (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 at-risk groups work together with governments?

Most of our sponsorships are through a program called the Rainbow Refugee Assistance Partnership (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 Refugee Assistance Partnership?

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 LGBTI 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 LGBTI refugees different from sponsoring non-LGBTI refugees?

LGBTI 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 transgender newcomer should be supported by a group with transgender 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 at-risk 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, "*Capital Rainbow Refuge: Helping LGBTQ+ Refugees Arrive and Thrive*"
<http://www.capitalrainbow.ca/>

RSTP, "*Rainbow Refugee Assistance Partnership (RRAP)*"
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/special-initiatives/lgbti-refugee-sponsorship-pilot-project/>

Rainbow Refugee
<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.G 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 [at time of interview – now, at time of writing in 2022, there are 130]. 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) the protection needs 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/territorial 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: About the program"
<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.H 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 biweekly 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

ZINC, "This amazing man paid for 58 refugee families to resettle in Canada"
<https://www.facebook.com/ThisIsZinc/videos/657971534403516/>

3.1 TRAINING AND INFORMATION FOR REFUGEE SPONSORS IN CANADA

Location: Toronto, Ontario; National

Name of Organization: Refugee Sponsorship Training Program

Type of Organization: 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 IRCC's centralized processing office 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, "Fact 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.J 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 SAH 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 SAH Association is also supported by the SAH Navigation Unit 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.