

Sponsoring a refugee – Information and Resources

“A refugee is someone who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”

Types of sponsorship

If you want to get involved with refugee sponsorship, you need to identify what type of sponsorship you wish to be part of:

Full private sponsorship – Church or community group (CG) provides both the finances and the settlement support for the full 12 months after arrival. If the refugee has not yet been assigned to resettlement in Canada via the visa office abroad, they need to undergo the *refugee determination process* abroad. The refugee applicant fills out *application forms* and the CG fills out an *undertaking*, which is then submitted to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) for processing.

Family-linked – Relatives in Canada provide the settlement funds for the full sponsorship year, and the CG provides in-kind settlement support. Process is same as full sponsorship. The timeline for these sponsorships can vary from *eight months to several years*, depending on where the family is from and how much of a backlog there is at the visa post.

Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) – A cost-sharing program with the Canadian government, which provides six months of settlement funds, with the CG providing the other six months, plus settlement support for the whole year.

BVOR cases are on a list provided by the *CIC Matching Centre*. There are currently some 400 cases on the list, *most of them non-Syrian*. Requests for BVORs can be made through your coordinator (*see contact information at the end*).

If BVOR cases are “travel ready,” meaning they have had their medicals and obtained their visas, they can arrive in Canada within *a month*. Otherwise they might come within *2-4 months*.

Sponsorship Steps and Responsibilities

CG responsibilities

- First form a core group of 4-6 members to make a start, bringing in others as you go for specific tasks and fundraising.

- Raise the total amount of money needed for a full year of settlement support for the full private sponsorship and half year of settlement support for BVOR. As a guideline, we suggest about **\$27,000** to support a family of four for 12 months for a full sponsorship. The amount would go up or down depending on family size. For a BVOR, the amount needed would be roughly *half*.
- Expenses include rent, furniture, food, clothing, transportation, prescriptions, non-emergency dental procedures, etc.
- Meet family at the airport and provide temporary housing.
- Help family to find affordable permanent housing
- Help them access OHIP/SIN, banking and other services. (As soon as they arrive at the airport they become **Permanent Residents of Canada** – and hence are *no longer refugees* – so are eligible for OHIP and SIN)
- Register adults for ESL (English as a Second language) classes and give guidance in finding a job. Settlement agencies such as Kingston Community Health centres –Immigrant Services are able to help with some of these tasks. (see list of community Resources below)
- Help register children in school
- Provide orientation and help the family budget for monthly expenses
- Provide friendship and emotional support.

List of National resources

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/index.asp> - Citizenship and Immigration Canada

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/list-sponsors.asp> - List of Sponsorship Agreement Holders in Canada

<http://www.rstp.ca/> - Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) – [handbook for sponsoring groups](#)

A program designed to support the Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) of Canada, their Constituent Groups, Groups of Five and Community Sponsors on a national level (excl. Quebec).

<http://ccrweb.ca/> - **Canadian Council for refugees** - A national non-profit umbrella organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees and other vulnerable migrants in Canada and around the world and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada.

<http://lifelinesyria.ca/> - **Lifeline Syria** will recruit, train and assist sponsor groups to welcome and support 1,000 Syrian refugees coming to Canada as permanent immigrants to resettle in the GTA over the next two years

National/Global Funding agencies

The UN Refugee Agency - https://donate.unhcr.ca/index.php?gclid=CJHq2PqImsgCFQlcaQodt_IDig

Canadian Red Cross - http://canadian.redcross.ca/Refugee-Crisis/?gclid=CK3ss7KKmsgCFYM_aQodifAA6A