



— SPONSORSHIP INFO SHEET —

WHO IS A REFUGEE?

A refugee is a person who has been forced to flee their home country because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, membership in a social group, or other similar factors. For these same reasons they are unable or unwilling to return home and in order to be eligible for resettlement in Canada, they must also demonstrate that they are unable to remain in their country of asylum.

“A refugee is a person who has been forced to flee their home country...”

WHAT IS REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP?

Since 1979 Canada has been a world leader in the resettlement of refugees from around the globe. The largest number of refugees who come to Canada are sponsored by private citizens and groups who provide financial, emotional, and settlement supports throughout their first year in Canada.

Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) are organizations who hold a specific contract with the federal government through *Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)* to facilitate private sponsorship and to help ensure that Newcomers are able to access the required settlement services. SAHs often work with Constituent Groups who provide on the ground support.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SPONSORING GROUP?

Direct settlement support lasts for a period of one year following the refugee's arrival in Canada.

Financial Support – Ensuring Newcomers have adequate financial supports in place including start-up costs and monthly disbursements.

Reception – Meeting Newcomers at the airport and welcoming them into their new home.

Lodging – Providing a suitable home and basic furnishings and amenities.

Care – Ensuring access to food, clothing, transportation, and other basic necessities.

Settlement Support – Helping Newcomers adjust to life in their new home in Canada by accessing settlement supports such as medical services, language training, eventual employment or education, childcare, etc.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO SPONSOR A REFUGEE (FAMILY)?

There are a great many factors that go into a sponsorship agreement, thus it's impossible to predict exactly how much money will be required. A very rough estimate is included below.

Family Size	Approximate Cost
1	\$20,000
2	\$30,000
3	\$35,000
4	\$40,000
5	\$45,000

WHAT DOES THE PROCESS OF SPONSORING A REFUGEE (FAMILY) LOOK LIKE?

There are two common types of sponsorship cases facilitated by SAHs in the Private Sponsorship world.

Sponsor-Referred

These are cases where the sponsoring group identifies an individual or family in need of sponsorship (through family members in Canada, or international organizations, etc.) and makes an application for them directly. Generally this would involve:

- 1) The sponsoring group identifies the individual or family and approaches the SAH. The applicant does *not* need to have UNHCR status.
- 2) The SAH assesses the applicant's eligibility.
- 3) The sponsoring group (Constituent Group *or* CG) raises the required funds and submits their criminal record checks to the SAH.
- 4) The SAH, CG, and Primary Applicant *or* PA fill out the required paperwork and the SAH submits it to IRCC (Federal government)
- 5) IRCC and the overseas visa office assess eligibility and admissibility (security and medical screens, and an in-person interview). This period can take between 1 and 3 years.
- 6) The visa office makes a final determination.
- 7) The refugee arrives in Canada as a Permanent Resident and the 1 year sponsorship period begins.

Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR)

These are cases where the government determines that a refugee (family) has settlement needs that are critical or would benefit from additional support in Canada and thus actively go searching for a group in Canada to help with their settlement. *In BVOR cases the federal government pays 6 months of the sponsorship while the CG is responsible for 6 months plus settlement costs.*

Generally this would involve:

- 1) The sponsoring group identifies an applicant profile from the BVOR database, someone they think would be able to settle well in their community. Alternately they request the SAH to suggest a profile.
- 2) The CG raises the required funds and submits their criminal record checks to the SAH.
- 3) The SAH and CG fill out the required paperwork and the SAH submits it to IRCC.
- 4) IRCC assesses sponsor eligibility and arranges travel. This period can take between 2-4 months.
- 5) The refugee arrives in Canada as a Permanent Resident and the 1 year sponsorship period begins.

PARTNERSHIPS

The sponsorship world is all about developing strong and effective partnerships

The Synod of the Diocese of Kootenay SAH generally works with member parishes in the Interior of British Columbia. We encourage interested parties to seek out partnership with local community partners as well though.

Are you interested in getting involved?

Contact the Diocesan Refugee Sponsorship Coordinator

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