

Guidelines and Processes for Refugee Sponsorship

Are you or your congregation looking into sponsoring a refugee? Here's some information you'll need to know.

- Definitions and Roles
- Process and Budgeting
- Sponsorship Training
- Working with Other Churches
- Working with a Community Group
- What to Do Once You Get the Notification of Arrival

Definitions and Roles

The Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec is a refugee **Sponsorship Agreement Holder** (SAH). Under that agreement, member churches and congregations are considered **Constituent Groups** (CGs). CGs are the groups on the ground doing the day-to-day work of refugee sponsorship and support.

Constituent Groups are an essential part of the refugee sponsorship process in Canada, and critical to Canada's compassionate response to the refugee crisis in the world. Refugees may be government sponsored (called Blended Visa Officer Referred—BVOR) or privately sponsored (PSR). There are somewhat different requirements for each of these categories, different processing times, and different settlement budgets.

[Glossary of Government Terms](#)

Process and Budgeting

- Orientation - considering the need, process and motives & expectations
- Commitment - board or church motion
- Form sponsorship lead team (the team should have a captain)
- Contact CBOQ
- Selection and Application
- Awareness and Fundraising
- Gather donations
- Welcome, settlement and integration

Sponsorship Training

The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP), sponsored by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, offers helpful resources in its [Handbook for Sponsoring Groups](#), available online. We particularly draw your attention to Chapter 6, The Sponsorship Process; Chapter 7, Settlement Preparation, and Chapter 8, The First Year and Beyond.

Also see these RSTP publications:

- [Managing Expectations Resource Kit](#)
- [Self-assessment Tool for Sponsors](#)
- [Fact sheet: Cultural Awareness](#)

Working with Other Churches

Are you working with other churches to sponsor a refugee family? Your congregation is a registered Canadian charity. As a charity, you are obligated to ensure that all funds you receive support your charitable purpose. Canadian charities can send money between themselves, as long as the funds support their charitable work. As a congregation you will need to report money received from and sent to other charities (called "qualified donees") on the charitable tax filing with Canada Revenue Agency.

If a group of churches who are all registered charities are working together, each congregation will need to take the following steps:

- Pass a motion ensuring that they have "owned" refugee work as their own charitable work, linked to their charitable purpose.
- Ensure that each congregation has a record of the **registered charitable number** of the other churches involved.
- If one church is taking the lead on disbursements supporting sponsored refugees, they should establish a **separate bank account** for that purpose and follow all the usual practices of sound financial management, record keeping, and project monitoring.

Working with a Community Group

In many Canadian communities, groups of volunteers are coming together to help sponsor a refugee family. Often these groups don't have a legal structure and are not a registered charity. Churches, as registered Canadian charities working with these groups, have some particular obligations for accountability to Canada Revenue Agency.

As a charity, you will need to have a signed agreement with the group, and establish other processes that demonstrate you have maintained direction and control of charitable funds and are assured they are being used as directed and in support of your charitable purpose.

Please review [Congregations Partnering with Community Groups](#) notes on the church's obligations as a registered Canadian charity, and working with community based groups in a way that will meet Canada Revenue Agency requirements.

What to Do Once You Get the Notification of Arrival

Your group has received a "NAT" (notification of arrival transmission) letting you know you have been assigned a refugee family for support. What do you do now?

Pre-arrival

- Take some time to review your settlement plan and make any necessary changes. You may need to research housing, child care, settlement agencies, schools, etc.
- Identify the group members who will be welcoming the refugees at the airport or at the destination indicated in the NAT. Share your cell phone numbers or e-mails with the Refugee Advisor at the national office, in the event that Border Services is unable to reach you.
- Book an appointment with the local CIC (Citizenship and Immigration) officer for the first refugee intake interview.

Note: Where there is no local CIC available, take two passport size photos of the refugees, complete the application for IFH (Interim Federal Health Program), complete the FIN0017E (direct deposit document), and e-mail these documents to the local CIC office. Send the originals by secure mail to the local CIC office.

- Gather the forms and note the office locations that the refugees will require in order to ensure they have access to everything they are eligible.

Arrival and Post-arrival

- Pick up refugees from arrival point. If you do not have a translator at the pick-up point, use the translator accompanying the refugees at the airport.
- Review the [First Weeks Checklist](#)
- [Some common foods](#)
- The refugees will require a mailing address (or temporary address if housing has not been secured) to register for programs and to receive the Permanent Resident card. The following steps will need to be completed:
 - Apply for SIN number(s)
 - Provincial medical plan

- Federal child tax benefit
 - Open a bank account
- Help refugees budget, using the monetary amounts the government has given during the intake interview. Money management will assist in their settlement.
- Continue house-hunting with help from the settlement agency workers. Some landlords will require a guarantor to sign the lease.
- Show refugees how to use basic things - public transit, paying for items at the store, phone, etc.

Resources

- [Fact sheet: All About Health Care Coverage](#)
- [Interim Federal Health Program \(IFHP\)](#)
- [How to Apply – Interim Federal Health Program](#)