
Refugee Sponsorship

*Getting organized to
sponsor refugees*

June 2015

GETTING ORGANIZED TO SPONSOR REFUGEES

In the case of Private Sponsorship, applications must be signed by a SAH (Sponsorship Agreement Holder). A SAH is an incorporated organization that has signed an agreement with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada about private sponsorship of refugees.

Some SAHs work with Constituent Groups, a group authorized in writing by the SAH to act on its behalf in sponsoring refugees. Constituent Groups can be faith, ethno-cultural, community, union, or neighbourhood groups working to sponsor refugees. The committee chairperson and the supporting SAH complete the application forms.

For private sponsorships, a first and ongoing task of the committee will be fundraising. Usually, 50% of the budget should be raised before the application is submitted to the SAH for approval.

HELPING NEWCOMERS TO RESETTLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Members of the sponsoring group should be available to spend time with the newcomers on a daily basis during the first two weeks after arrival to help them feel safe and adjust to their new neighborhood, as well as register for documents and school.

Each member of the sponsoring group should be introduced to the newcomers so a trusting relationship can be established. It may be wise to provide the newcomers with a picture of the group members with their names, how to contact them, and who to contact for a specific need.

When visiting the newcomers during their first weeks here, it is suggested that group members go in pairs. If the adult newcomer is female, a male visitor should be accompanied by a female. Telephone the newcomer to inform her of the time of your visit. If language is a problem, you and the newcomer can agree on a "password" so that when you arrive and buzz the apartment, the newcomer will know that it's a committee member who wishes to enter.

During the first two weeks after arrival, members of the group could accompany the newcomers on a city tour, a visit to a supermarket, to sponsors' homes, to the nearest shopping mall, to a place of worship, to a post office, to a library and to a park.

As you introduce the newcomers to Canadian culture, it is wise to show an interest in their culture. Group members may decide to do some research about the newcomers' culture before their arrival. After the newcomers have settled in for a while, you may want to organize an information session about the newcomers' culture for members of your group.

Organizing Your Committee

Any group of people can organize themselves to sponsor refugees. Once gathered, the group should form a committee to initiate fundraising and develop a settlement plan. Everyone on the committee must be willing to dedicate a significant amount of time and energy in preparation to receive and settle the newcomer family. In time, each member of the committee should have a specific role to play in the arrival preparations and in the settlement period.

POSITION	TASKS
Chairperson	Calls regular meetings, liaison between groups, and with settlement agencies
Secretary	Writes and distributes minutes
Treasurer	Keeps a record of money raised/donated specifically for refugee sponsorship, issues receipts (if necessary), helps to track expenses upon arrival of refugees, assists the refugee to open a bank account and learn to live with budget
<u>Other tasks:</u>	
Member 1	Accommodations - searches for affordable accommodations (look for a place where fuel, water and possibly electricity are included in the rent; think of convenient bus routes, location of schools, etc.), <i>often good to have two people in committee work on this task</i>
Member 2	Furniture and household items - looks for furniture and keeps a record of what is available through donations
Member 3	Education - inquires about ESL classes and support – for adults and children, contacts the local school about registering children, contacts settlement agency about language assessment for adults, sets up volunteers tutors (if necessary)
Member 4	Medical – searches for family doctor and dentist, ensures refugees have initial health assessment when they arrive, looks for support for mental health issues (if necessary), monitors services covered by IFHP (Interim Federal Healthcare program – supplementary benefits for refugees, ISANS can offer information)
Member 5	Documentation – collects information about different programs to register for (MSI, SIN, Pharmacare), assists refugees in completing documentation upon arrival
Member 6	Social – keeps track of community events and encourages members of the groups (not just the committee members) to involve and invite the refugee family in social events, provides neighbourhood and bus orientation to the refugee family, organizes potlucks for the group, etc.

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORMS

For a private sponsorship, the committee can be involved in preparing a budget for 12 months which will indicate how much money needs to be raised. See the table below for items to consider in budget preparation.

Preparing a Budget

Item	Cost/ month	Things to Consider
Rent		Is the rent at a level the newcomer will be able to afford after the sponsorship ends?
Electricity/ water/fuel		Are electricity, water and fuel included in the rent?
Food		Take into account that newcomers will need some national foods in their diet.
Transport		Monthly bus passes for adults and children.
Phone/ Internet		Phone can be hooked up for local calls only, purchase calling cards for international calls/Internet service
Household supplies		Laundry and cleaning supplies
Clothing/ Personal supplies		Will need to purchase start-up clothing (ie. winter boots, etc.) at beginning/ Toiletries
Furniture		Use donations and second hand stores. May have to buy some furniture, e.g., dressers, mattresses
Health		Plan for costs not covered by medical plan – some dental
Discretion		Pocket money; recreation
Education		School trips, books and supplies; day care to allow parents to study English
Reserve		Allow a minimum extra of 5% of budget for unanticipated expenses.
TOTAL FOR 12 MONTHS:		

FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT "WISH LIST" FOR SPONSORED FAMILY

Kitchen

can opener
clock
coffee and tea pots
colander
cookie sheet
cooling rack
cutlery and tray
cutting board
dish cloths & towels
dish rack
frying pan
garbage pan
grater
hand mixer
kettle
knives
ladle, tongs, spatula, turner
measuring cup and spoons
mixing bowls
baking pans (cake, loaf
muffin, pie)
pitcher
potholders
potato peeler & masher
recipe book
scissors
toaster
wooden spoon

Dining

table and chairs
cutlery
dishes
glasses
cups/mugs
serving dishes
table cloth/place mats
pepper & salt shakers
Living Room
sofa
easy chairs
curtains/drapes/blinds
lamps - floor/table
table -coffee, end
television & stand
cushions

bookcase/shelves

Bedrooms

alarm clock
beds & mattresses
bedspread
blankets
coat hangers
curtains
dressers
lamps
mirror
pillows
sheets & pillow cases
wastebasket

Bathroom

bath mats
clothes hamper
hair dryer/curling iron
shower curtain
scales
toilet brush
towels and face cloths
wastebasket

Laundry/Cleaning

broom & dustpan
basket
drying rack
iron and ironing board
laundry basket
sponge mop
vacuum cleaner
/electric broom

For Children

desk, chair & lamp
story books
toys/games

Other

framed pictures
basic tools and nails
house plants
paper/pens/pencils
radio

sewing supplies
umbrella
vases
calendar
computer(s)

Personal Supplies

comb & brush
razor & shaving cream
nail file/clipper
tooth brushes & tooth
paste
deodorant, shampoo
soap

Household Supplies

detergent - dishes, laundry
household cleaner
kleenex
paper napkins
toilet tissue

Food Staples

baking powder & soda
cereals
flour, sugar, salt, spices
margarine, oil
pasta, rice
tea

*Note: it is recommended
that mattresses, sheets &
bedding be purchased new
to avoid possible bedbug
issues*

PREPARING FOR THE ARRIVAL OF THE REFUGEES

The SAH contact person will inform the sponsors of the probable arrival date of the refugees. This will happen after the refugees have been interviewed, have had their medicals and security checks, and have received a letter of acceptance from the visa office overseas. What remains to be done in the application process is for the International Office for Migration (IOM) to issue the refugees a visa and arrange for their travel to Canada.

When the sponsors know the arrival of the refugees, it is time for them to develop a detailed settlement plan and organize themselves for the arrival of the refugees.

Immediate preparations before the arrival of the refugees include the following:

Who	Activities
Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call meetings as required • Make contact with ISANS (for example, have group members attend a workshop on 'Refugee Sponsorship and Settlement') • When the arrival date is known, contact the CIC settlement officer to <u>set up an appointment</u> for the refugees to be registered in the Interim Federal Health (IFH) program • If required, book an Interpreter for airport arrival and for the following days (Interpreters need to be booked at least 48 hours in advance)
Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a list of committee members with phone numbers to be given to the refugees. Include with the list a picture of each committee member. • Prepare a list for the refugees indicating who is to be contacted for what problems and emergencies (i.e. medical emergency, problem with the apartment, school, etc.)
Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together with the person who has located a potential apartment to rent, arrange for a meeting of the apartment superintendent and the refugee. If the refugee is satisfied with the apartment, arrange for a <u>signing of the lease by the refugee</u>. • Soon after arrival, assist the refugee to set up a bank account and learn the banking system • Help the refugee to develop a monthly budget • Assist the family in paying monthly bills (rent, electricity and telephone)