

Handbook for Private Sponsorship of Refugees

Updated February 2019

Full private sponsorship

A full private sponsorship is when sponsors provide full financial and settlement support to a refugee or refugee family. It is sometimes called Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR), named sponsorship, or family-linked sponsorship. As with other sponsorships under the CBAC, we only work with church groups (of any denomination or multiple churches working together), so anyone who wishes to sponsor family members or friends must partner with a church.

How is full private sponsorship unique?

- Refugees are identified (named) by the sponsor. Typically, they are friends or family members of people living in Canada, or the sponsors know the refugees.
- Individual co-sponsors are common. A co-sponsor (individual) is someone who officially partners with the sponsoring group to provide settlement and/or financial support to a family. Typically, a co-sponsor is a family member or friend of the refugee. Sponsors and co-sponsors agree on the types of support each will provide as part of the settlement plan. Co-sponsors may provide accommodation, interpretation, community orientation, some financial support, etc. depending on the case.
- The sponsor assumes full financial responsibility, including start-up costs and 12 months of income support.
- Processing is much slower because families in other streams have already completed some of their processing by the time they are matched with a sponsor. It may take up to 18 months - 3 years from the initial submission of the application to the arrival of the refugee family, depending primarily on the visa office processing their application. Check the average processing time for the local visa office [here](#). For Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon the average overseas processing time is currently around 18-24 months.
- In addition to the forms that the sponsor must complete, sponsors must ensure refugees complete and submit forms along with the application.
- With a full private sponsorship, the sponsor, with assistance from the CBAC, must determine whether the refugee and his or her dependent family members are eligible and admissible to come to Canada before they submit an application to sponsor the person or family. There is also a chance that the application may be rejected and the refugee found ineligible or inadmissible to come to Canada.

Eligibility and admissibility – Who can be resettled?

The Principal Applicant (PA) in a refugee case is not necessarily the head of the family, but the person with the strongest reasons for being a refugee. If the Principal Applicant is eligible for resettlement, he or she may bring his or her spouse and dependent children, provided that all family members are admissible. When sponsoring through the CBAC, refugees do not require refugee status from the UNHCR or their country of asylum, provided that they meet the other eligibility criteria. However, refugee status adds credibility and strength to the application. Sponsors may find this [Case Assessment Chart](#) helpful in determining whether a refugee is eligible.

Eligibility:

You meet the basic eligibility criteria if you:

- Live in a country other than your country of origin or Canada,
- Meet the definition of either
 - Convention Refugee Abroad class, or
 - Country of Asylum class,
- Are not able or willing to return to live in your country of origin (voluntary return),
- Are not able to integrate where you live now (local integration),
- Have no other durable solution, and
- Have the ability to settle successfully in Canada.

If you are being sponsored by a Group of Five or Community Sponsor you must also have:

- Refugee status as recognized by the UNHCR or the state (country of asylum), and
- Documentary proof of such status (e.g. UNHCR mandate letter).

Please note that the final decision is made by a Canadian Visa Officer by means of an interview and medical assessment with you and your family.

Convention Refugee Abroad – definition:

You may be in this class if you:

- are outside your home country; **and**
- cannot return there due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on:
 - race,
 - religion,
 - political opinion,
 - nationality, or
 - membership in a particular social group, such as women or people with a particular sexual orientation.

Country of Asylum class – definition:

You may be in this class if you:

- are outside your home country or the country where you normally live **and**
- have been, and continue to be, seriously and personally affected by civil war or armed conflict, or have suffered massive violations of human rights.

Admissibility:

After a positive interview decision by the interviewing Visa Officer, the Canadian authorities will be conducting the following tests for you and each member of your family to determine whether you are admissible to Canada:

Medical screening

- Medical history
- Health exam
- Lab tests for some communicable diseases
- X-rays to check for tuberculosis
- Complete medical file is reviewed and finalized by immigration health officials

Security & criminality screening

- Interviews
- Biometric and biographic collection
- Database checks

Reasons for inadmissibility include the individual posing a threat to national security, having a history of serious or organized crime, having committed violations of international or human rights, being a danger to public health, or engaging in misrepresentation. Only when you pass all three admissibility checks, you will be able to be privately sponsored to Canada.

Adaptability

Canadian visa officers will also assess adaptability, which is the ability of the refugee to successfully establish in Canada. Factors that increase adaptability are having family members or friends in Canada, having a sponsor, speaking one or both official languages and education as well as personal characteristics such as motivation to integrate into Canada.

Cap System

We have a limit or cap on how many refugees we can identify for sponsorship each year. This number is imposed by the government and our cap allocations are assigned to us on March 1 annually.

Sponsoring as a Group of 5 or Community Sponsor

If you are hoping to sponsor relatives of a family in Canada, but are unable to do so because of the cap system, we may recommend that you proceed as a **Group of 5** or **Community Sponsor**. As a community sponsor, you would not sign an agreement with the CBAC, however the CBAC would be happy to provide training, guidance and assistance with the application process. For more information on sponsoring as a community sponsor, see [this video](#). The chart below shows some of the differences between a full private sponsorship as a Community Sponsor versus a full private sponsorship through the CBAC as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder.

	Community Sponsor/G5	Sponsoring through the CBAC
Sign sponsorship agreement with the CBAC, CBAC also signs application	No	Yes
Who can you sponsor?	Refugees must have proof of refugee status from the UNHCR or their country of asylum. Refugees must be outside their country of origin and meet the other eligibility and admissibility criteria.	Refugees do not need to have proof of refugee status from the UNHCR or their country of asylum. Refugees must be outside their country of origin and meet the other eligibility and admissibility criteria.
Access to resources and guidance from the CBAC	Yes	Yes
\$200 administration fee	No	Yes
Application forms	There are some extra application forms that must be completed by community sponsors to prove that they have the financial and settlement capacity to sponsor a family.	
Chance of rejection	Many refusals are due to lack of refugee status documentation. Refugees may be rejected if they do not pass eligibility or admissibility.	Refugees may be rejected if they do not pass eligibility or admissibility.

Full private sponsorship – The process

1. Identifying a refugee - Generally, groups will initiate a private sponsorship because they know a family member or contact in need of sponsorship. Your newcomer family may request help in bringing other family members to Canada. However, if you would like to sponsor under a full private sponsorship and need assistance in identifying a refugee or refugee family, we know of many people who have requested private sponsorship for themselves or on behalf of their family members overseas.
2. Contact Jacqueline at the CBAC at refugeesponsorship@baptist-atlantic.ca or 506-635-1922 ext 1014 to start the conversation about sponsorship and to ask questions. Jacqueline can also tell you how many of our cap spaces we have used, and may recommend that you proceed as a community sponsor.
 - Sponsors looking to sponsor through the CBAC must have a church that is willing to underwrite (guarantee) the sponsorship, have the financial capacity to sponsor, and have a group of at least 5 people to assist with settlement of the refugee family.
3. Work with the refugee and the CBAC to ensure that the family meets the eligibility and admissibility criteria.
4. Host an information session at your church about sponsorship, especially if this sponsorship is your first one or you have previously sponsored under another stream. Make sure the congregation understands the commitment and the expected timeframe for your sponsorship. The CBAC can help by providing a speaker and resources.
5. Identify partners in your area: other churches or community groups who can support your sponsorship.
6. Present a motion to the church to pursue the sponsorship of the particular refugee family and hold a church vote.
7. Identify a core committee to lead the sponsorship and appoint a committee chair. We suggest a committee of 8-12. If you are already engaged in a sponsorship, we suggest that you form another welcome team to support the second family, but you can wait to do most of the settlement planning until the refugee has his or her interview.
8. Begin fundraising. Full private sponsorship is an expensive undertaking, and you can fundraise while you wait for the family to come. The co-sponsor may be able to contribute financially or by hosting the refugee(s) in his or her home.
9. Sign a sponsorship agreement between the church leading the sponsorship and the CBAC (your Sponsorship Agreement Holder) – not applicable if you are sponsoring as a community sponsor.

10. Complete the “sponsor forms” and have the refugee complete the “refugee forms”. The CBAC can assist with completing these forms.
11. Complete and return a scanned copy of the sponsorship application forms to the CBAC, along with a \$200 administrative fee to help offset some of our administrative costs as we process your application and support your sponsorship. The CBAC will look over your application. Only once we have checked your application and suggested any changes should you send in the original documents. The CBAC will submit your completed application on your behalf to the Resettlement Office of Canada in Ontario (ROC-O).
12. Begin preparing for settlement and continue fundraising as your application is processed. At any time, you may check the status of your case online (see below).
13. The ROC-O will check your application for completion and accuracy (ensuring all necessary documents are included, etc.). For community sponsors especially, the ROC-O will assess whether they think your group can successfully sponsor the family. They decide whether or not the sponsors is approved but NOT if the refugee is eligible and admissible to come to Canada.
14. If the sponsor is approved, then ROC-O will send the file to the corresponding visa office overseas. The next portion of processing happens overseas at the visa office. When you check the website for average processing times, it refers to the processing times for the overseas visa office portion. Please note that it may take several months before the next step (the interview) is completed due to many applications.
15. **Immigration Interview** - Identity is confirmed and refugees are interviewed by Canadian immigration officials. During the interview, the Canadian visa officer will assess whether the refugee is eligible to come to Canada, whether his or her story is credible, and how likely it is that the refugee can establish successfully in Canada (adaptability). The RSTP has some helpful information about how a refugee can prepare for his or her interview. The CBAC receives notice when a refugee under a full private sponsorship is called for an interview. The refugee is responsible for arranging to attend the interview in person. The interviews are often at the visa offices but sometimes the visa officers travel to other locations. The visa officer decides whether or not a refugee will come to Canada, pending a pass in the medical, security and criminality screenings. The refugee will know whether he or she passed the interview if he or she is given information on where to go to complete medical checks. The refugee and the sponsor will receive written confirmation of the decision. Once the interview is complete the rest of the process can happen within months. All privately sponsored refugees arrive in Canada as Permanent Residents.
16. Screening – The refugee and his or her family members will go through three screenings simultaneously: a security screening, a criminality screening and an Immigration Medical

Exam. Please note that a refugee with a medical condition will only be prevented from entering Canada if that medical condition causes a danger to public health.

17. Applications finalized – Canadian visa offices overseas finish processing the application and issue visas.
18. Travel – The Canadian visa office refers the case to the IOM – International Organization for Migration. The IOM secures exit permits on behalf of the refugees if necessary and arranges flights and travel documents.
19. NAT – At least 10 days before arrival, sponsors receive the Notice of Arrival Transmission with the flight details for the refugee/refugee family.
20. Welcome your family and support them throughout the 12-month sponsorship period.
21. Complete monitoring reports for the CBAC at [1 month](#), [6 months](#), [10 months](#) and at the end of [12 months](#).

Checking the status of your application or update case information

- [Check your refugee family's application status online](#) or update their address in Canada
 - Agree with the terms and conditions
 - Identification Type: select Application Number/ Case Number
 - Identification Number: insert your "G" number here
 - Fill out Surname/Family Name, Date of Birth, and Place of Birth
 - Some sponsors have found that it does not work with their case info
- [You may also get your local MP to inquire into your case.](#)
- [Inquiring into your case or updating case information – Whom to contact when and how](#)
- [Check average processing times for a full private sponsorship, by country](#)

Full private sponsorship application forms

The sponsor forms (to be filled by the sponsoring group):

[Instruction Guide](#)

For Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) and their Constituent Groups (CGs)

1. [Undertaking/Application to Sponsor \(IMM5373\)](#)
2. [Sponsor Assessment \(IMM5492\)](#)
3. [Settlement Plan \(IMM5540\)](#)
4. Optional: [Use of a Representative \(IMM 5476\)](#)

For Community Sponsors

1. [Undertaking/Application to Sponsor \(IMM5373\)](#)
2. [Sponsor Assessment \(IMM5492\)](#)
3. [Settlement Plan \(IMM5515\)](#)
4. Optional: [Use of a Representative \(IMM 5476\)](#)

The refugee forms:

[Step-by-step guide on completing the “refugee forms” \(IMM 0008 forms – video\)](#)

[Instruction Guide](#)

- [Document Checklist \(Appendix A\)](#)
- Application for Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian Protected Persons Abroad (IMM 6000):
 - [Generic Application Form for Canada \(IMM 0008\)](#)
 - [Schedule A – Background/Declaration \(IMM 5669\)](#)
 - [Schedule 2 Refugees Outside Canada \(IMM 0008 SCHEDULE 2\)](#)
- **Optional (but recommended):** [Use of a Representative \(IMM 5476\)](#)

Financial Obligations

Sponsors through the full private sponsorship program are responsible for paying start-up costs and income support to families. Although the cost of living varies in each area, sponsors are required to support an individual/family at a level that is at least on par with Social Assistance rates. The level of support may be higher, depending on the real costs for the family in their community of residence (housing, utilities, transportation, phone, basic necessities). Your group will want to fundraise some extra money in order to cover unexpected costs and possibly to cover some of the optional costs below. [Financial support](#) calculations can be found here to help you calculate the minimum standard that you can use as a guideline for monthly support and start-up costs.

Start-up costs - may include first month rent and damage deposit, home furnishings, furniture, first grocery order, winter clothing upon arrival and school supplies for school age children.

IRCC uses the following information to calculate start-up costs when they give cheques to Government Assisted Refugees. For example, the amount for start-up costs for a family with two adults and two children is \$5,395.

Most of these items can be donated in-kind. The value of in-kind donations can be deducted from the amount for start-up costs given to the family using the following table.

Fundraising and accepting donations

Raising funds to support your family is an important part of preparing for sponsorship. Much of the budget for sponsorship will come from donations from churches and individuals, but it is likely that your group will need to organize some church and community fundraisers, and approach businesses as well. Individuals and businesses can also support through in-kind donations of furniture, etc. and these donations will reduce the cost of sponsorship. You may set up a separate bank account through the church for the sponsorship. It is important to appoint a group member as treasurer to keep track of donations and money spent. You may be able to issue tax receipts for donations through the church. See the fact sheet below for details.

- [Tax Receipts and sponsorship](#)

Budgeting

Sponsors are responsible to create a reasonable budget for the family, based on real costs for housing, transportation, groceries, utilities and other monthly expenses. Please be sure to include some spending money and some reserve money for unexpected expenses. Part of your role will be to teach them how to live on this budget with their projected monthly income, introduce them to our Canadian currency and assist them with budgeting as they get settled into Canada. Newcomers will open their own bank account and all of their funds will be deposited directly into their account. They will pay their own bills and ultimately be responsible for the management of their own funds.

Other sources of funding:

Sponsors should apply for any and all sources of funding as soon as possible, typically as soon as the family members receive Social Insurance Numbers (SIN numbers).

- [Benefits Finder](#)
- [Federal child and family benefits](#) – Families with children are eligible for federal child benefits. To calculate how much your family is likely to receive, use the [Child and family benefits calculator](#). You can find the payment dates for various federal benefits [here](#). The child benefits take a few months to arrive after you apply, but they are retroactive and so the first cheque will be a large amount. Some sponsors have chosen to supplement this income for their family until the child benefits arrive.
- [Provincial benefit programs](#)
- [GST/HST Credit](#)
- [Additional benefits for people with disabilities](#)
- [New Brunswick Fuel Supplement](#)
- [NS Heating Assistance Rebate Program](#)
- [Newfoundland Home Heating Rebate Program](#)
- [Nova Scotia Community Refugee Support Fund](#) (for welcoming initiatives, social and cultural events, and volunteer honorariums)

Travel loans:

Sponsors are NOT responsible to repay travel loans, but many sponsors have chosen to do so with left over funds at the end of the sponsorship period or by hosting a special fundraiser for this purpose.

Refugees receive a travel loan from the government of Canada to cover the cost of flights and expenses associated with their travel to Canada. Families are responsible to repay the full cost of these loans. All loans are interest free and payments are required to begin at month 13.

Other optional costs:

Sponsors are NOT responsible for the following costs, but may decide to pay them.

- Extra dental and vision care – The Interim Federal Health Program covers basic dental and vision care. Some dental and vision care for children is covered under provincial insurance programs. Sponsors may have to or may choose to supplement this coverage. [Healthy Smiles, Clear Vision \(NB\)](#) is available to low income families for children under the age of 18 yrs. This covers basic dental and vision care for newcomer families in New Brunswick at no cost to the sponsor or the family.
- Extras – Recreation programs, community activities, etc.

Settlement Responsibilities

In addition to the financial responsibilities, sponsors are responsible for the settlement of the family for their first 12 months in Canada. Such responsibilities may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Welcoming the family at the airport upon arrival
- Housing: find suitable housing and furnishing it
- Financial: develop a budget, assisting with learning to pay bills and living on a budget, assist with opening bank account, support the family financially for 12 months
- Documentation: SIN, provincial health care, Child Tax benefits, HST rebate, Healthy Smiles-Clear Vision Program (NB)
- Education: register children in schools, register parents in English classes. In rural communities where no ESL programs are available, sponsors are responsible to provide this service for the family.
- Medical: assist with finding a doctor, dentist, eye doctor
- Orientation: helping the family learn how to navigate around the community – where to access basic services (groceries, bank, Mosque/Church, shopping, library, etc); learn how to use public transportation
- Social: provide social opportunities for the family to meet others in the community, visit in their home, have the family into your home

The Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada (CBAC) is one of 105± Sponsorship Agreement Holders in Canada. This means that our organization has entered into an agreement with the Canadian government that allows us to facilitate sponsorship of refugees from around the world.

