

# **Private Sponsorship of Refugees with ISANS as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder**

## **Information Package - 2021**

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## Sponsor a Refugee

Sponsoring a refugee family is a concrete way to respond to a humanitarian crisis unfolding overseas. Sponsorship is a commitment of two or more years, which includes preparing, applying, waiting, and helping the refugees to settle after arrival.

## What is Private Sponsorship

Private sponsorship is the resettlement of refugees to Canada, in which private groups such as communities, Faith Groups or organizations, provide the financial costs of sponsorship and settlement support. It is a legal commitment. Sponsors commit to providing financial support (e.g. for lodging and food) and care for the sponsored refugee for up to 12 months or until the sponsored refugee becomes self-sufficient, whichever comes first. There are several different programs that bring in refugees through some form of private sponsorship, including Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs), Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) and Joint Assistance Support (JAS).

## Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs)

A Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) is an organization that has signed an agreement with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). A SAH works with Constituent Groups (CGs) that may sponsor refugees under the SAH's agreement. SAHs assume overall responsibility and liability for the management of sponsorships under their agreement. In order to manage this liability, SAHs set criteria for groups sponsoring under their agreement.

Most SAHs will handle the extensive paperwork on behalf of co-sponsors and CGs, usually in return for a fee (maximum of \$250/application). They also require proof that the sponsor has the means to support the refugee.

When groups are ready to sponsor:

- The SAH will help to identify a refugee for sponsorship
  - The application forms will be completed and signed
  - The application forms are submitted to IRCC for processing (a process that can take weeks to months)
  - Once approved, the application is sent overseas to the visa post
  - Refugees are called for interviews at the visa posts
  - If accepted, refugees complete medical and security screening
  - The International Organization for Migration (IOM) then contacts refugees for their travel arrangements
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ISANS became a SAH in 2011. ISANS has a dual role – it is both a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) and a Settlement Service-Provider Organization (SPO). Generally, SAHs focus on refugee protection and SPOs focus on service delivery. As a SAH-SPO, ISANS is involved in providing financial, settlement, and emotional support and services to refugees, as well as training partners and sponsors, community building, family reunification, connecting clients to services, and more. In addition, during the sponsorship year, SAHs monitor the sponsorship to ensure roles and responsibilities are understood and all requirements of the sponsorship and the settlement needs of the refugee(s) are met.

## Private Sponsorship of Refugees with ISANS

There are currently 4 streams through which ISANS can support privately sponsored refugees. These include Family-linked, Community Group, Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR), or Joint Assistance Support (JAS).

Below is information on the differences between the streams:

	<b>ISANS Family-linked PSR</b>	<b>ISANS Community Group PSR</b>	<b>ISANS Community Group Blended Visa Office Referred</b>	<b>ISANS Community Group Joint Assistance Program</b>
<b>How the refugee application is initiated</b>	Identified by a local family/individual for sponsorship (also referred to as a 'named sponsorship,' 'full sponsorship' or 'family-linked sponsorship').  These applications use the annual ISANS PSR allocation from IRCC.	Initiated by IRCC in response to major resettlement initiatives (such as the Syrian initiative or the Afghanistan initiative).  Additional PSR spots are available beyond the yearly allocation to SAHs.	Initiated by IRCC as refugees identified by a Visa Office overseas (Blended Visa Office-Referred or 'BVOR') are recommended to be sponsored by a community group.	Identified by IRCC. Refugees sponsored under the JAS program are identified as having special needs owing to personal circumstances that will likely result in a longer or more complex period of integration.
<b>Funding</b>	100% funded by co-sponsors.  Start-up costs covered by co-sponsors.	ISANS submits applications on behalf of community groups.  Fully funded by Community group.  100% of financial support up front	6 months income support paid by sponsors.  6 months income support paid by IRCC.  Start-up costs paid by sponsors.	Funded 100% by IRCC.  This type of sponsorship sometimes can go up to 2 years.

		from community group.  Start-up costs paid by community group		
<b>Financial role of sponsors</b>	Co-sponsors provide all financial and all settlement support.	Co-sponsors provide all financial and all settlement support.	Co-sponsors provide <u>some</u> financial and all settlement support.	IRCC provides all financial support for 2 years; JAS group provides settlement support.
<b>Medical coverage</b>	Eligible for MSI (healthcare).  All sponsored refugees are eligible for Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) for 12 months.	Eligible for MSI (healthcare).  All sponsored refugees are eligible for Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) for 12 months.	Eligible for MSI (healthcare).  All sponsored refugees are eligible for Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) for 12 months.	Eligible for MSI (healthcare).  All sponsored refugees are eligible for Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) for 24 months.
<b>Processing times</b>	Processing times overseas can vary, as refugees must be interviewed and screened by Canadian Embassies overseas.  Allows for the reunification of families separated by war and conflict.	Processing time overseas may be quick; but, in some cases, it can take 3-5 years.  Allows both for refugees who have no family links as well as the reunification of families separated by war and conflict.	Processing times are (usually) quick, as refugees' applications have been pre-approved and pre-screened.  Provides resettlement to refugees who have no family links in Canada.	Processing times are (usually) quick, as refugees' applications have been pre-approved and pre-screened.  Provides resettlement to refugees who have higher needs for extra resettlement support.

In this information package, we will focus on family-linked sponsorships.

### ISANS' Family-Linked Private Refugee Sponsorship Allocation

For 2021, ISANS private refugee sponsorship allocation is 106 spots. We will know our 2022 allocation early in 2022. ISANS has an open selection process, emphasizing a family focus that is endorsed by a Constituent Group (CG). Each allocation spot is for one individual. Each application filed with the federal government requires spots for all members of a family (including spouses or children still living in their country of origin). Some of

these spots will go to dependents of previously submitted privately sponsored refugee applications. So, for example, if a sponsored person gets married while waiting to come to Canada, IRCC requires that we add this spouse to the sponsorship application.

ISANS Private Refugee Sponsorship program staff estimate the demand for spots is at least 10 times the actual allocation we receive.

## Private Sponsorship of Refugees at ISANS, 2022-2024

This year, ISANS will accept interest forms for family-linked sponsorship from October 20 to January 15, 2022. Through Family-linked sponsorships, ISANS supports people to sponsor family member(s) or a friend who fit the UN refugee definition for private sponsorship. Through these sponsorships, ISANS helps reunite families separated by conflict or persecution. In Family-linked sponsorship, the network of support includes family members based in Canada, who have already gone through a process of resettlement.

The process starts with filling out ISANS' online Interest Form, which can be found [on ISANS' website](#). This is a form for people who are expressing interest in sponsoring refugee(s) to Nova Scotia through ISANS as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder.

ISANS will screen the forms against IRCC's PSR sponsorship eligibility criteria and requirements related to viability of sponsorship, admissibility, and residence requirements. As a Sponsorship Agreement Holder, ISANS is the sponsor of the application and is therefore responsible for screening and approving sponsors and constituent groups.

Starting in January 2022, eligible forms will be identified. ISANS will then reach out to the person (co-sponsor) who has filled out the Interest Form and begin an in-person screening process. If both the co-sponsor and the refugee they wish to sponsor meet all sponsorship-related criteria, they will be asked to fill out a Sponsorship Application Form. Depending on the number of qualified interest forms, this may take place in 2022 or 2023. Over this time period, **we plan to proceed with as many eligible interest forms** as possible, based on current and/or new IRCC eligibility criteria.

"The Interest Form and Sponsorship Application Form do not guarantee sponsorship with ISANS.

It is very important that only correct and up-to-date information is provided on the Interest Form and Sponsorship Application Forms. Interest Forms and Sponsorship Application Forms with incorrect or misleading information about the co-sponsor and/or refugee (s) they wish to sponsor may not be accepted.

In summary, the steps involved for someone interested in applying for ISANS's SAH refugee allocation spots are:

- 1) Co-sponsor submits an Interest Form online (deadline January 15, 2022)
- 2) Interest Form will be reviewed for eligibility (starting in January 2022)
- 3) Co-sponsors submitting eligible Interest Forms will be contacted by ISANS to fill out a Sponsorship

Application Form in the spring or summer of 2022

- 4) Sponsorship Application Forms will be reviewed by ISANS and will be submitted to IRCC over a 1-2-year period (2022 and 2023), based on the number of PSR spots we receive each year as a SAH and the number of eligible Interest Forms we receive..
- 5) IRCC begins to review the Private Refugee Sponsorship application

In order to qualify for private refugee sponsorship with ISANS co-sponsors have to meet admissibility, residency and viability of sponsorship selection criteria and requirements:

### 1. **Admissibility**

The refugee(s) being sponsored:

- Meet(s) the refugee definition (for example, they are outside their country of origin) and there is strong reason preventing them from returning to the original country.
- Has a relationship with the sponsor (family or friend).

### 2. **Residency requirement of co-sponsor**

The co-sponsor must:

- Be a resident of Nova Scotia
- Have lived in Nova Scotia for 2 years or more
- Has settled well in the community

ISANS will only accept **one** interest form (survey) per household, and the household cannot have other active sponsorships. To ISANS, active sponsorship means:

- Having one or more sponsorship files being processed by IRCC overseas and/or
- Providing financial and settlement support to refugees who have arrived within this year

We have these criteria to ensure that as many people as possible are able to engage in private sponsorship.

### 3. **Viability of sponsorship**

Co-sponsors and Constituent Group members are over 18 years of age and:

- Do not have a criminal record
- Attend sponsorship and settlement orientation sessions
- Have the financial capacity to sponsor the number of refugees requested (per ISANS rate schedule) for up to 4 people
- Have a completed budget
- Have a completed settlement plan

## **Support of Constituent Group**

ISANS requires that co-sponsors and Constituent Group members are over 18 years of age. The co-sponsor needs to be supported by a Constituent Group (community association) and have a minimum of five volunteers to assist with the settlement of refugees. ISANS needs an up-to-date list with each sponsor group member's full name, mailing address, phone number, and email. It is important to keep ISANS informed of any changes to this information so that our files are up to date.

When signing a Sponsorship application (forms include the '*Undertaking*'), co-sponsors assume the following responsibilities with respect to the refugee individual or family:

*Reception:*

- Meet the refugee upon arrival at the airport and welcome them in the community
- Provide orientation to life in Canada

*Lodging:*

- Provide suitable accommodation, basic furniture, and other household essentials

*Care:*

- Provide food, clothing, local transportation costs, and other basic necessities of life

*Settlement assistance and support by helping refugees:*

- Complete required forms including health insurance, social insurance, and child tax benefits
- Open a bank account
- Learn English (i.e. attend English Classes)
- Understand the rights and responsibilities of permanent residents
- Find employment
- Access resources (e.g. community support groups, settlement services)
- Register children in school and guide them through the school system
- Locate a family physician and dentist

The support begins on the date the sponsored refugee arrives in Canada. The sponsorship continues for a period of one year, or until the refugee becomes self-supporting. The ultimate goal is to help the refugee(s) become independent!

Refugees resettled in Canada are responsible for paying for their overseas medical examination, travel documents, and transportation costs to Canada. Refugees may receive a repayable loan from IRCC to cover these costs.

Unless they have co-signed loans, co-sponsors and Community Groups are not responsible for any debt that a refugee incurs in Canada. Sponsors are also not responsible for any liabilities arising from the refugee applicant's misconduct.

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## **Police Checks**

Co-sponsors and Constituent Group members have to complete a criminal record check, a vulnerable sector check, and child abuse register check. ISANS requires a scanned copy of a criminal record check and child abuse register check for each sponsor group member. ISANS staff will inform the co-sponsor and CG when these checks need to be completed. Checks must be dated within the last year prior to submitting the application. After 3 years, if the co-sponsors and CG still have an active sponsorship commitment, ISANS will require a new check. We accept copies of police checks from other work/volunteer activities.

## **Sponsorship and Settlement Training Sessions**

Each co-sponsor and community group member must attend a Settlement Training Session with ISANS staff. When it is time to start preparing for the arrival of the refugees you have sponsored, ISANS will contact you to arrange a session for your group. From time to time, we host open orientation workshops for new members, members wanting a refresher, or prospective sponsors wishing to learn more. Contact ISANS for more information.

## **Financial Support**

Sponsored refugees are entitled to receive adequate and effective support. Your sponsorship is a contractual agreement between you (the co-sponsors), Constituent Group, ISANS (your Sponsorship Agreement Holder/SAH) and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). This contract comes with minimum financial obligations determined by the rules of the Government of Canada's Private Sponsorship Program, and ISANS requires co-sponsors to be prepared to cover additional expenses.

Financial support is a major component of your responsibilities. It gives sponsored refugees the chance to develop language and other work-related skills to help them find meaningful, well-paid work long-term, as well as integrate well into their community and Canadian society. These guidelines are also in place to make sure refugee newcomers develop decision-making skills and financial independence during their sponsorship. For sponsored refugees, the sponsorship period is an opportunity to dedicate time and energy towards learning (or improving) their English and making Canada their new home.

## **Funds Required Before Sponsorship Application Submission**

ISANS requires that the Family-linked co-sponsor has the financial capacity to sponsor the number of refugees requested (per ISANS fund schedule below). The funds cannot come from the refugee themselves. The Government of Canada's rules around minimum financial support can get very complex, particularly when sponsoring multiple family members, adult children, or providing significant in-kind support.

The financial support required to fulfil your responsibilities will vary based on the real cost of living in your community, any available supports from other family members or the community, in-kind donations, the composition of the family, and their unique circumstances and needs. We generally use IRCC's Sponsorship Cost Table amounts as a guide: <https://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Sponsorship-Cost->

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Table May-2018.pdf. The table below provides ISANS's general estimate of the total cost of Family-linked sponsorship.

Family Size	12 Months of Income Support	Start-Up Costs	Estimated Total Annual Settlement Cost (\$)
1	13,200	3,300	16,500
2	19,700	5,100	24,800
3	20,400	6,300	26,700
4	21,200	7,500	28,700
5	23,700	8,600	32,300
6	25,700	9,800	35,500
For each additional member, add:	1,600	1,100	2,700

We do not currently charge a fee for supporting co-sponsors with the sponsorship application paperwork and delivering sponsorship/settlement orientations.

Your financial commitment will last for 1 year from the date of arrival. During this time, you will be responsible to provide enough money or in-kind support to cover each family member's:

- Start-up costs (e.g. furnishings, clothing)
- Housing
- Basic needs (e.g. food, personal care)
- Transportation
- Communication

In order to demonstrate the co-sponsor's financial capacity to sponsor, you will be required to provide proof of income such as Notice of Assessments, T4s, Pay stubs, or bank statements. Failure to provide those documents might cause your application to be rejected. We strongly encourage you to raise additional money to cover further supports that will allow the sponsored family members to make the most of their first year here.

Here are some examples of things sponsors can provide or pay for, over and above the minimum requirements:

- Renters insurance (highly recommended!)
- Dental costs and medical devices that are not covered by provincial/federal coverage
- Emergencies, unforeseen circumstances
- Educational costs such as university applications, language proficiency tests, specialized courses, certified translations
- Recreation programs, bicycles, children's camps, excursions

- Computer, other technology helpful for employment/education

The items listed above are not mandatory for sponsors to provide, but they can have long-term benefits for the successful settlement of newcomers.

### Adult Children

IRCC considers each child over the age of 18 an adult. Monthly, they must receive their own money for basic needs, transportation, and communication, even if they are dependents residing with the rest of the family. Additional funds will therefore be required for each child over the age of 18. It is important to be aware of children turning 18 while the application is in process, or during the sponsorship year.

### In-Kind Support

In-kind donations may also reduce the financial resources required. The table below is provided by IRCC as an estimate of the value of a variety of in-kind donations according to family size. These approximate figures are based on annual costs, and may change over time ([https://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Sponsorship-Cost-Table\\_May-2018.pdf](https://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Sponsorship-Cost-Table_May-2018.pdf)).

### In-Kind Deduction Table

Family size	Shelter	Clothing	Furniture	Household Needs	Linens	School Start-Up	Food Staples
1	7,008	385	1,085	300	80		105
2	9,984	770	1,708	325	160		150
3	10,632	1,033	2,016	350	240		195
4	11,328	1,295	2,310	375	320		240
5	12,024	1,558	2,604	400	400		285
6	12,373	1,820	2,898	425	480		330
For each additional member, add:	12,372 (for family of 7+)	263	294	25	80	\$75 per child between ages 4 and 21	45

### Start-up Costs

The amount of start-up support ranges depending on the resources of the sponsor group. IRCC provides a minimum dollar value in the Sponsorship Cost table below ([https://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Sponsorship-Cost-Table\\_May-2018.pdf](https://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Sponsorship-Cost-Table_May-2018.pdf)).

Family Size	Minimum Start-Up Costs
1	\$3,000
2	\$5,100

3	\$6,300
4	\$7,500
5	\$8,600
6	\$9,800
Plus 1	\$1,100

Start-up costs can be reduced by in-kind donations, but can never be replaced entirely. Newcomers must receive some money directly to purchase a few new items of their choice. Some items such as mattresses, personal clothing, shoes and boots must be purchased new, not donated second-hand. For start-up, sponsors purchase and/or provide:

- household items
- kitchenware
- basic furniture
- linens and towels
- food staples
- clothing/winter clothing
- deposit for utilities
- internet installation
- last month's rent
- school supplies
- cell phone
- (if possible) computer

#### **Start-up Cost: Additional Information**

The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) has created an online Minimum Financial Support Calculator, which includes start-up: <https://www.rstp.ca/calc/?lang=en>

#### **Monthly Financial Support**

Co-sponsors must provide, at minimum, the equivalent of Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) rates, as shown at: <http://www.rstp.ca/en/bvor/rap-resettlement-assistance-program-rates/>. RAP is the government program that provides support to government-assisted refugees. RAP rates are the minimum standard for all private sponsorships. If you do not provide at least RAP rates monthly, you are in breach of your contractual agreement. In most circumstances, it would be impossible for a newcomer/family to live on these monthly amounts, and sponsors will need to provide more in order to ensure a reasonable standard of living. RAP rates are only enough in very particular situations (e.g. free housing).

From the funds raised, the sponsored newcomer(s) must receive money each month to cover:

- Housing (rent and utilities)
- Basic needs (food, personal care)
- Transportation (1 transit pass/person)

- Communication (cell phone)

Together, ISANS and the co-sponsor will determine what the appropriate monthly amount will be for the sponsorship. Family composition is important when calculating minimum monthly financial support. RAP provides allowances for maternity, food, clothing, newborns, and special dietary needs. If these are relevant to your sponsorship, you must provide, at minimum, the same amounts.

If a refugee becomes financially self-sufficient during the 12-month sponsorship period, the co-sponsor is not obligated to provide income support for the remainder of the sponsorship. However, the co-sponsor must be prepared to resume assistance if the refugee ceases to be self-sufficient during their first year in Canada.

### Preparing a Budget

Co-Sponsors must complete a budget document that reflects their financial support plan. A draft must be submitted for approval by ISANS before ISANS submits the sponsorship application to the Government of Canada. Sponsors can use ISANS' budget template or create their own document. Around the time of arrival, ISANS will ask you for an updated copy. As your SAH, ISANS is required to keep a final copy on file.

### Budget template

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 (e.g. 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 – e.g., 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
<b>TOTAL FOR 12 MONTHS:</b>		

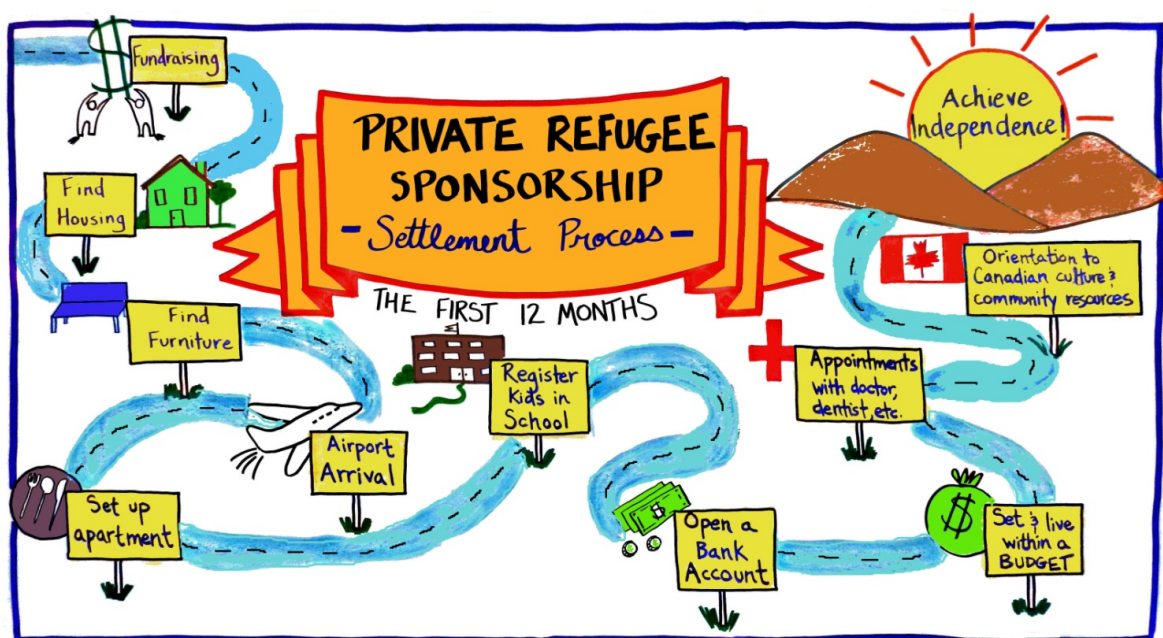
### Budgeting Considerations

- Each sponsorship is unique: there is no “one size fits all” budget.
- Sponsorship is a contractual obligation with rules around the minimum financial requirements, but your job is to ensure the newcomer’s basic needs are met.
- Be careful not to provide too much financial support that will set newcomers up for a difficult post-sponsorship transition.
- Avoid creating a relationship of dependency by providing a monthly amount that far exceeds what they might earn/receive after the sponsorship. If you have enough money, consider paying for certain specific additional programs/expenses that will benefit them in the long term.

Families with children will receive Canada Child Benefit (CCB) payments (\$450-\$550/child/month). However, CCB cannot be counted in your budget as sponsor support.

- Families with many children will receive a large CCB, which may enable you to provide a monthly amount closer to RAP rates. However, you can never go below RAP rates because of CCB.
- CCB applications can take a few months to process, and the first payment will be retroactive. Budget and explain accordingly.
- Newcomers should know how much money they will get, when, how, and from whom. Avoid surprises!
- When a child turns 18, CCB payments end. Children over 18 must receive their own financial support for basic needs and communication. Plan and budget accordingly.
- Be prepared if a child will turn 18 before arrival or during the sponsorship. Ensure the parent knows well in advance how much their monthly support will decrease or change.

## Settlement Preparation



The settlement plan is a plan detailing what you and members of your group will do to orient and support the newcomer(s) during the sponsorship. It will provide your group with a framework for working through the many details of who will do what, when, how, and with what resources, and where those resources will come from. This plan should be used as a guide with the understanding that circumstances may change and that it may need to be revised and updated to reflect these changes during the settlement period.

Each co-sponsor needs to create a settlement plan. This settlement plan is a tool for your sponsor group to summarize how you intend to deliver the settlement assistance needed to support refugee newcomers. Before submitting the sponsorship application, the co-sponsor **MUST** submit a signed settlement plan and proposed budget (provided as a separate document) to ISANS.

Please inform ISANS of any significant changes or updates to the settlement plan or budget post-arrival.

ISANS is required to have these documents on file. Feel free to add any additional information, and remember to keep a record of the support you provide in case IRCC monitors your sponsorship as part of their assurance program.

### ISANS Settlement Plan Template

Prior to the arrival of the refugee, the group or committee should take some time to review their Settlement Plan and make any changes that may be needed. This would also be a good time to identify or, if previously discussed, confirm what needs to be completed by whom and when.

Detailed information about a settlement plan can be found at: <http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/27chapter7.pdf>

A settlement plan needs to include information on:

- SIN, MSI, Child Tax Benefit, GST forms
- Housing
- Finances
- Shopping
- Interpreters
- Settlement Services
- Transportation, driver's licence
- Clothing
- Language Training
- Employment
- Childcare
- Health
- Education/Job Training
- Religion
- Culture
- Crisis & Trauma
- Recreation
- Budgeting
- Income Tax

Here is a general idea of how the settlement plan could look:

What Do We Need to achieve?	Activities	Who?	By When?	Resources Required?	Who Needs to Know?
Monthly budget developed	1. Research local cost of living 2. Find out about community resources for budget planning support for the newcomers 3. Design budget, etc.		E.g. Aug. 31 Sept. 15 Sept. 15	For each item, list all resources required: money, materials, etc.	Finance Committee
Apartment rented	1. Search local vacancies in \$500 - \$700 range 2. Talk to prospective landlords, etc.		Oct. 15	Will need \$1,000 - \$1,400 for first and last month's rent.	Finance Committee, Housing Committee
Furnishings and household items in place	1. What furnishings are already available from in-kind donations and what is still needed				

## While you're waiting

The time prior to the refugee's arrival can be used to prepare so that their needs are met. Taking classes through the government-funded Refugee Sponsorship Training Program ([www.rstp.ca](http://www.rstp.ca)) is one way to get a full understanding of the responsibilities you are undertaking. Workshops cover topics such as finding suitable accommodation, navigating the health-care system, and supporting someone who has experienced trauma or torture.

## Sponsorship Group Responsibilities

The first month will likely be the most demanding as the family deals with the shock of coming to an entirely new place and starting a new life, but over time, as their comfort level in Canada increases, the need for your support decreases.

## 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 to prepare 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, liaises 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>It is often good to have two or more people working 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 learning English (English as an Additional Language: EAL) 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 (supplementary benefits for refugees, if applicable)
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.

## Fundraising

When you decide to sponsor, you take on a significant financial obligation. If you need to save or raise funds, it may be useful to set up a committee to deal strictly with fundraising. You will want to ensure that finances are carefully and appropriately monitored. Fundraising will vary depending on whether your organization is a registered charity, a non-profit organization, or an ad-hoc group.

Consult the Canada Revenue Agency for up-to-date information on how to handle fundraising as a charity:  
[www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/chrts/plcy/cps/cps-028-eng.html](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/chrts/plcy/cps/cps-028-eng.html)

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## Appendix 1 - Other Settlement Resources and Task Tools

### Additional Resources

United Nations High Commission on Refugees: <http://www.unhcr.ca/>

Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP): <http://www.rstp.ca/en/>

## Settlement Tasks: Specific Checklist

Task	Detail	When	Who
Housing	Prepare bedrooms	Now	
Furniture & Household Items	Find, organize items for rooms	Now & pre-arrival	
Food Shop	Buy staples for family	Pre-arrival	
Clothing Shop	Collect donations of and purchase winter clothes	Arrival	
Airport Arrival	Provide transportation from airport to apartment	Arrival	
Medical	Set up initial doctor & dentist appointments	1 <sup>st</sup> Month	
Budgeting	Accompany family to bank to open an account, discuss budgeting in Canadian context	1 <sup>st</sup> Month	
Documents	Assist in completing forms (complete list on page 4 of this guide)	1 <sup>st</sup> Month	
Registration at ISANS & EAL Assessment	Make appointment and accompany family	1 <sup>st</sup> Month	
Orientation topics	Explaining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency procedures (calling 911, fire, etc.)</li> <li>• Medical emergencies</li> <li>• Bus System</li> <li>• Apartment</li> <li>• Neighbourhood</li> <li>• Services – Food Banks, etc.</li> <li>• Recreation – Parks, etc.</li> <li>• Libraries</li> </ul>	Months 1 - 3	
Social Events	Visit local library, rec centre, community centre, faith centre	Ongoing	
Orientation topics	Explaining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paying their travel loan</li> <li>• Paying taxes</li> </ul>	Month 3 - 6	
Job Search	Assisting in finding family members' employment	Months 6 +	
Housing	Inform and apply for public housing Request change to tenancy lease (go from yearly to month-to month contract)	Month 6+  Month 8	
End of sponsorship	Inform and refer to Provincial Income Assistance if needed	Month 12	

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## Settlement Checklist – After Arrival (General)

### Have you planned the following?

- ☐ Meeting the refugee upon arrival
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Furniture
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Clothing (including: coat, shoes, boots, hat)
- ☐ Interpretation
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Personal items
- ☐ Provide pocket/recreation money
- ☐ Provide phone card
- ☐ School books, supplies

### After Arrival

- ☐ Basic health assessment (to anticipate any needed medical interventions)
  - ☐ Explain what to do in a medical emergency and other type of emergencies
  - ☐ Give a tour of home and neighbourhood
  - ☐ Intake appointment at ISANS (Call 423-3607 to book; intake worker will organize English assessment, book ISANS orientation, and set up meeting with employment counsellor)
  - ☐ Complete forms/applications (MSI, SIN, GST, etc.)
  - ☐ Complete EAL assessment and register in EAL School
  - ☐ Registration of Children in School (if applicable)
  - ☐ Open a Bank Account, assist with budgeting
  - ☐ Provide bus tickets/bus pass and explain the bus system
  - ☐ Find a family doctor, dentist, optometrist
  - ☐ Provide interpretation
  - ☐ Explain travel loans
  - ☐ Assist in finding work
-

## 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  
first -aid kit  
tweezers

### 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

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## Forms/Applications to Complete

1. **MSI (Medical Services Insurance)** – Provides coverage for doctor and hospital services, which is available for permanent residents on arrival in Canada. Forms available by calling **1-800-563-8880**. Applicant will need a copy of their landed document or permanent resident card and a confirmation of residency.
2. **Nova Scotia Pharmacare Program** is a provincial drug plan designed to help Nova Scotians with the cost of prescription drugs. The program offers protection against drug costs for families who have no drug coverage or if the cost of prescription drugs becomes a financial burden to them.

The program is available to all Nova Scotians with a valid health card and there is no premium or fee to join the program. The annual, out-of-pocket cost is capped at a percentage of family income. Specific questions about individual situations can be answered by calling **1-800-544-6191**.

3. **Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP)** – Limited medications and vaccines for sponsored refugees **only if needed to prevent or treat a disease that is a risk to public health or to treat a condition of public safety concern**. General Inquiries: **1-888-242-2100**. **The exceptions are:** BVOR refugees who receive full IFHP (which includes supplementary dental and health benefits) and all children.
4. **Social Insurance Number (SIN) Card** – An identification number that allows you to apply for GST Credit, Child Tax Benefit, etc. To apply, complete application at Service Canada – the card should arrive within two weeks. Everyone has a different number and it is illegal to use someone else's number. If lost, report it to police and to Service Canada.
5. **Goods Services Tax (GST) Credit** – A program to help people with modest incomes. If they qualify, applicant will receive a cheque 4 times each year. To apply, complete form RC151 (on Revenue Canada website – [www.cra-arc.gc.ca](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca) – and mail to tax centre in your area). To apply, applicant must be: 19 or older, a permanent resident, have a SIN number, provide date of birth, date of marriage (if applicable), and spouse's SIN number (if applicable), report on any income earned for last 3 years, and have banking information ready. Must complete income tax each April.
6. **Canada Child Tax Benefit** (if applicable) – A monthly payment to help support families with children under 18. Amount differs according to income, number, and ages of children. Traditionally, the mother receives the payment. To apply, look for forms on Revenue Canada website ([www.cra.gc.ca](http://www.cra.gc.ca)). Applicant must provide children and parents' landing documents, children's birth certificates (if available), and family income documents.

Family must complete income tax for both husband and wife each April in order to continue to receive child tax benefits. If new immigrant receives letter from Revenue Canada, follow up immediately as this may lead to suspension of payments.

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## Orientation Topics For Newcomers

### Safety

911 and what to do in an emergency  
Symbol for poison  
Fire safety  
Child safety (car seats, cords, supervision, balconies, water safety, playground, helmets, storing poisonous substances and medications, electrical outlets, items babies can choke on)  
Personal safety (going out alone at night, carrying large amounts of cash, keeping door locked, answering the door to strangers, carrying a card with your name, address, etc.)  
Elevator and escalator safety  
Car safety (drinking and driving, seatbelts)  
Street safety (traffic lights and signs, crosswalks)

### Finances

Canadian currency  
Bank account/using bank services  
Budgeting  
Immigrant loans  
Income tax  
Goods and services tax (GST)

### Renting Accommodation

Lease obligations/rights  
Rent payments  
Utilities payment  
Public housing information

### Apartment Living

Noise level  
Use of appliances (stove, fridge, freezer, washer and dryer)

Cleaning supplies  
Garbage disposal  
Thermostat use  
Heating the apartment  
Water use  
Laundry use  
Fire alarm\intercom  
Follow-up on inspection findings  
Power outages  
Bathroom (what not to flush down the toilet)

### Telephones

Phone application and use  
Long-distance calls  
Use of phone cards/public phones

### Shopping

Procedures  
Money (coins and bills)  
Finding and recognizing items in stores/recognizing items on sale  
Store policies on exchanges/refunds  
Store sales/flyers  
Second-hand stores  
Wholesale and dollar stores  
Different stores to buy food

### Mail

Mail delivery/postal box  
Location of postal outlets

### Local Transportation

Bus routes and schedules  
Taxis (for emergencies)  
Use of crosswalks and traffic lights

### Life in Canada

Dressing for the weather  
Personal hygiene (products)  
Scent-free policies  
Social norms (i.e. lining up, personal space, being on time, keeping appointments, etc.)  
Recognizing stress and culture shock  
Laws (child abuse, domestic violence)  
Information for singles

### Health Care System

Medical appointments  
Family physician referrals  
Hospital procedures  
Ambulance use/cost  
Pharmacy orientation (how to fill a prescription)  
Medication safety (i.e. do not share medications)

### Community Resources

Identifying resources (libraries, food and furniture banks, parks, family resource centres, faith centres)

### Neighborhood Orientation

(Under 1<sup>st</sup> month check)

